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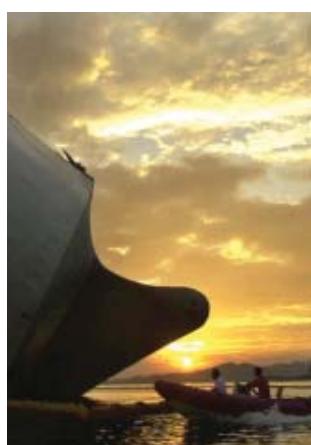
INSIDE



Suspended Search

The Coast Guard on Sunday night suspended the search for 18 crew members missing from an ethanol-laden tanker that exploded in the Atlantic Ocean, and were unsure whether search efforts would resume Monday morning.

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180 Missing

The Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility Sunday for a ferry explosion and fire that killed at least two people, though 180 more were missing, according to a radio report.

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'Rings' Rules

The epic journey of a raggedy gang of humans, hobbits, wizards, dwarves and elves hoisted the fantasy genre to Oscar glory Sunday as "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" won a record-breaking 11 Oscars, sweeping every category in which it was nominated, including best picture.

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'Chances high for delegate bill'

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

Chances are high that legislation pushing for the CNMI's own nonvoting delegate will be reintroduced in the U.S. Congress, according to Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano on the heels of a committee hearing held in Congress on the issue.

Adriano, who was among the three CNMI delegates to testify in the oversight hearing presided by the U.S. House Resources Committee in Washington D.C. last week, said he is expecting a result in favor of the CNMI.

He expressed confidence that his, Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio's testimonies on the issue sent a clear message that convinced panel members.

"It's the same argument that we've put before the committee of chairman [Richard] Pombo—that we're U.S. citizens. We have our sons in the military. We have so much land that's been used by the federal government... And I think the words we passed [on] has been heard in Washington and the chances of getting a nonvoting delegate bill is coming through. I see that because I have talked to chairman Pombo and his staff. Several members, including Guam, were there to support us," Adriano told reporters yesterday.

The hearing comes on the heels of a recent Congressional Delegation visit to

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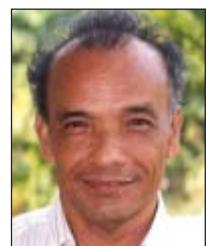
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, and Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano await the start of the U.S. House Resources Committee's oversight hearing on the CNMI's application for delegate status in the U.S. Congress. Right shows members of the CNMI delegation and other witnesses who spoke on behalf of the CNMI. Other inset shows member of the committee, including committee chairman Richard Pombo, second from left.

Senate to ask withdrawal of Atalig nomination

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano is poised to ask Gov. Juan N. Babauta to withdraw the nomination of Fermin Atalig as finance secretary after confirming reports that the appointee still has arrears to settle with the Marianas Public Lands Authority.



Atalig, in a separate interview, said yesterday that "I am trying my best to catch up with my obligation."

In justifying his position, Adriano said yesterday that the Department of Finance portfolio is a critical position that should be held to the highest standards.

"He's out of the picture, for me. I am not supporting Fermin [Atalig] to be the secretary of Finance at all. I plan to ask my chairman on the [EAGI] committee to make a recommendation to perhaps return him [Atalig] to the Commerce Department and stay there," the Senate

MPLA chair: Atalig has been making payments

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

Marianas Public Lands Authority Chairwoman Ana Demapan-Castro confirmed to a Senate member yesterday that Finance Secretary designate Fermin Atalig has been making regular payments—about \$600 per month—to the agency.

In a letter to Senate Minority Leader Pete P. Reyes, Demapan-Castro indicated that "Mr. Atalig continues to consistently make the minimum required payment."

Atalig has reportedly paid a total of

president told reporters yesterday.

"We have to show some model here to our kids that holding a position like that, you have to be clean and you have to hold the highest standard in controlling public

\$20,000 as of February 27, 2004. His last payment, according to Demapan-Castro, was made last Feb. 24, 2004.

MPLA commissioner Henry Hofsneider said yesterday the Commerce secretary still owes the agency \$36,350.80 as of Feb. 26, 2004.

Demapan-Castro disclosed the figures in a March 1 letter to the Senate in response to an Open Government Act requested by Reyes on Atalig's account.

Reyes, during a recent Senate session, had formally asked to participate in Executive Appointments and Government Investigations

See MPLA on Page 8

funds. With this situation that Mr. Atalig is in, I think it's not fair at all for me to proceed and support him," he added.

MPLA Commissioner Henry S.

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Stateless issue being researched

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton has reportedly tasked his staffers to study the elements involved in possibly introducing legislation that would grant U.S. citizenships to CNMI's 'stateless' individuals, Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano reported yesterday.

The senator said he, Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio were in the room when the Indiana congressman—a senior member of the House Committee on International Relations—instructed two of his immediate staff to research the matter.

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Local

hamilton

Report: Crisostimo spent most in 2003 polls

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The CNMI Commission on Election released yesterday the financial report of all candidates who ran for various government posts during the November 2003 midterm election with an apology for the delay.

Election commission executive director Greg Sablan said the Commission is required to make all campaign statements of account be made public by publishing them or by posting the same in certain places.

"I apologize that the publication timeline was inadvertently overlooked while I was on medical leave," Sablan said in his letter to the Board of the Election Commission, Office of Public Auditor, and Assistant Attorney General James Livingstone.

Along with the letter, Sablan released the unaudited financial report submitted by 81 candidates who ran for various government posts during the November 2003 midterm election.

Sablan said the financial reports reflect the summary of the unaudited receipts and expen-



Crisostimo



Manglona



Cing

ditures of the candidates during the 2003 midterm election.

The 2003 General and Special Elections candidates' statement of accounts, summary of receipts and expenditures noted that senatorial candidates

gathered the most monetary and in-kind assistance during the campaign period.

Democrat Senator Luis P. Crisostimo provided the Commission with \$61,451 worth of receipts and reportedly spent

a total of \$67,311.24 during the campaign period.

Next to Crisostimo is Sen. Paul Manglona, who reportedly spent \$58,291.63 during the election campaign but provided the Commission with \$53,563 worth of receipts. Former senator David Cing spent \$31,921.14 during his campaign period but submitted only \$31,884.06 in receipts.

At the House of Representatives level, Precinct 4 Rep. Claudio Norita received the most contributions, with \$29,093 in receipts and a total expenditure of \$19,654.51. Following

Norita is Arnold Palacios with \$22,555 in receipts and total expenses of \$18,543.

House Speaker Benigno Fitai submitted \$13,125 worth of receipts and total expenses of \$12,862.07, while former House Speaker Heinz Hofschneider submitted \$11,306.69 in receipts and \$6,923.89 worth of expenses.

The report noted also that former Rep. Daniel Quitugua has not filed his financial report. Board of Education Dino Jones and Roman Benavente submitted \$468.75 and \$441 in expenses, respectively, without receipts.

CNMI celebrates March as Women's Month

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente endorsed March 2004 yesterday as 16th Annual CNMI Women's History Month in celebration of women's accomplishments and contributions to the community, which connect the people of Northern Marianas to other nations.

"March is celebrated as national Women's History Month around the world. It is a month dedicated to celebrating international solidarity among women and the recognition of women's struggle for equality. It is a time to celebrate the many accomplishments women have made and recognize that changes are still needed. Therefore, it is only appropriate that we join others around the world in honoring the contributions, sacrifices, commitments and achievements women have made in their countries," the proclamation reads.

Benavente acknowledged

the Office of Women's Affairs for organizing yesterday's event. With this year's theme "Women—Inspiring Home and Possibility," the acting governor urged the community to celebrate the month with hope and sense of possibility that comes through the inspirational work of women.

"Too many times we take for granted this group of people who have not only given us life, who have nurtured us, who have given us support and inspiration, but who have also over the years proven their strength and determination by accomplishing many significant goals in our nation, and in our own Commonwealth. Throughout the month, women can celebrate the progress that has been made but also contemplate those areas of women's lives where more can be done," Benavente said.

He added that during "CNMI Women's History Month," like any other month, women on island would suffer as victims of sexual assault,

domestic violence, and discrimination. He said there is a need to see changes that transform relationships between women and men, so women will be able to take greater financial, political, and physical control of their lives.

According to the acting governor, the diversity of cultures and traditions in the Commonwealth makes it especially appropriate that women unite and share in celebrating their strength, talents in the arts, unity, and devotion to family and cultural values.

Benavente also endorsed March 6, 2004 as CNMI Women's Day—a day set aside to recognize and honor women as leaders of the community, wives, and mothers to their children.

"Women in the Commonwealth have advanced their positions within the work place dramatically over the past decades. More women have contributed to education, politics, health, economic development and social progress

of the islands. As wives and mothers, they devote themselves to teaching spiritual norms, moral values, and traditions to children. These provide stability and a strong foundation for cultural identity and pride in the community," according to the proclamation document.

This is the sixteenth year during which Women's History Month has been organized and celebrated in the Commonwealth.

The Governor's Office and Women's Affairs Office expressed themselves ready and prepared to assist CNMI women in their efforts to bring about changes needed to promote the interests of women within the CNMI and beyond.

As part of this month's celebration, the Governor, Lt. Governor and the Office of Women's Affairs coordinated an enrichment session for the Northern Marianas Beauty Pageant contestants last Saturday.



Teenager faces robbery, theft charges

The Attorney General's Office yesterday filed robbery and theft charges against a teenager.

Eighteen-year-old Seiichi Brel Aoki is facing the charges at the Superior Court. The criminal information did not indicate the defendant's gender.

Assistant Attorney General Karen Severy accused Aoki of snatching the purse of one Amelita Quiazon Cabrera last Aug. 31. (John Ravelo)

Police seeks help on robbery case

Authorities are now looking for an unidentified male suspect who, while onboard his bicycle, snatched the purse of a 32-year-old pedestrian in Chalan Piao.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said Ying Xiang Zhang was walking along Beach Road in Chalan Piao around 9:30pm Thursday when the incident happened.

Report said the victim got off

from work at the Michigan Garment Factory and was walking home. As the victim walked by the YCO Hardware, an unidentified male riding on a bike grabbed her purse and sped

north on the bicycle.

The victim chased the suspect toward the Chala Piao Mobil gas station but the suspect sped away.

Blas urged individuals who

may have details or additional

information to call the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042 or 664-9045. Information can also be forwarded to NMI Crime Stoppers tips line at 234-7272. (Edith G. Alejandro)

cars

**eye
clinic**

Police arrest man for assault

Authorities arrested a 39-year-old man for allegedly assaulting a hotel employee and causing disturbance Sunday night, police said yesterday.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said responding police officers arrested Francis Peter Jaworski around 7:02pm Sunday after assaulting Donald A. George, 52, of Aqua Resort Hotel.

The report added that the suspect had been drinking since that afternoon and became uncooperative and belligerent.

Police report that George, the on-duty security officer at the hotel, had approached Jaworski, who was reportedly causing a disturbance at the hotel poolside area. Instead of

listening, Jaworski allegedly pushed and punched the security officer.

Responding police officers approached the suspect but the suspect also allegedly assaulted officer Michael Langdon. The two struggled as other security officers held on to the suspect. He was eventually secured with a handcuff.

During the struggle, the suspect sustained a cut on his left eyebrow. Medics attempted to treat the suspect at the scene but due to his condition, he was brought to the Commonwealth Health Center for treatment. At the hospital, Jaworski allegedly threatened the physician and was very uncooperative.

After his treatment, Jaworski was brought to the Adult

Correctional Facility where he was detained. The suspect was charged with assault and battery,

assault and battery on an officer, disturbing the peace, and resisting arrest. (*Edith G Alejandro*)

FLIGHT SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2004



OES PTSA meeting

The acting Principal of Oleai Elementary School would like to inform the parents and guardians of its students that the PTSA meeting will be on Tuesday, March 9, 2004, 6pm, at the school cafeteria. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

NMA fundraising set

The Northern Marianas Academy seniors are trying to raise funds for an upcoming trip to Cairns, Australia.

Their main fundraiser—originally to be held on March 6, 2004—has been postponed and will now take place on Friday, March 12, 2004 at 5pm at the NMA campus.

"On behalf of the Northern Marianas Academy seniors we would like to apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding and support," the class said in a statement.

1040 Form distribution set

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI residents that the distribution of the 2003 1040 forms and instruction will begin on March 1, from 8am to 4pm, at the Office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation located at the DanDan Commercial Center.

All residents are asked to pick up the forms during regular business hours beginning March 1. Please be reminded that the deadline for filing 2003 1040 is Thursday, April 15, 2004 at 12am.(midnight).

Family Literacy meeting postponed

The Northern Marianas Family Literacy Consortium meeting has been postponed to Saturday, March 6, at 1pm. This will be held at the conference room of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library.

Everyone is requested to e-mail their suggestions before March 6 to consortium secretaries Concepcion L. Van Der Veen at concepcionv@hotmail.com or to Thelma Cing at tcing@hotmail.com.

All public and private schools, Parent Teacher Associations, agencies, groups or individuals who support family literacy in the CNMI are welcome to attend the meetings, join and/or collaborate with the NMFLC.

For more information, call Jonas Barcina at 664-5025/6, fax 664-5035 or contact the new NMFLC public information officer, Adela Kapileo, at akapileo@vzpacifica.net.

DES raffle draw postponed to May

The Dandan Elementary School has postponed its 6th Annual Cultural Day Raffle Drawing and Festivities from Feb. 14 to May 22.

"We apologize for the inconvenience this has brought upon the parents and others who have made efforts to participate in this school function. On behalf of the administration, teachers, parents, students, and the PTA officers of their school community, we thank you for your understanding and continued support in every way possible," said the school in a media statement.

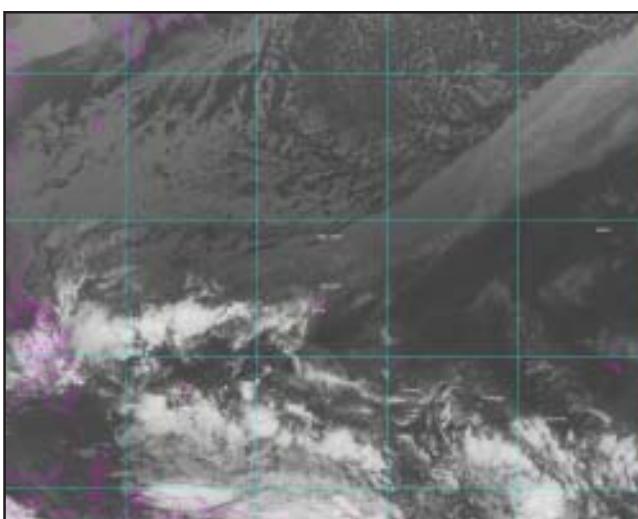
Saipan, Tinian battles veterans sought

Veterans of the World War II battles of Saipan and Tinian will be invited to the commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Battle for Saipan and Tinian to be held June 12-16, 2004 on Saipan.

The Committee for the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of WWII is soliciting help from newspapers, churches, state and local chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans Associations, non-profit organizations, and family members to help identify veterans to be recognized.

Anyone who knows a veteran involved in these battles should send their name and contact information to Jessica Jordan at marianas04-anniversary@yahoo.com, or call (670) 234-7212; fax: (670) 234-7211, or mail: PMB 409 Box 10000 Saipan MP 96950.

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M. MARCH 1, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends from near 2n130e to eq158e. low-level convergence north of the trough is creating scattered showers south of Yap between 5n and 9n from 137e to 142e and scattered showers with isolated thunderstorms across southern Chuuk and Pohnpei states between the Equator and 7n from 145e to 161e. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of Tarawa between the Equator and 5n from 174e to 180. A cold front extends southwestward from near 21n180 to 18n176e then continues as a shear line to 16n157e and ends near 14n145e. Low clouds and widespread showers are found along and up to 200 miles north of this boundary.



SAIPAN AND TINIAN

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.



GUAM AND ROTA

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 10-15 mph. Highs near 86. Lows near 76.



PALAU

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.



POHNPEI

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.



YAP AND ULITHI

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: East at 15 kt.



KOSRAE

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.



CHUUK

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.



MAJURO

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

Winds: Northeast at 20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Showers	76F (24C)	59F (15C)
Beijing	Cloudy	36F (2C)	20F (-7C)
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	67F (19C)
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81F (27C)	68F (20C)
London, England	Partly Cloudy	43F (6C)	32F (0C)
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	62F (17C)	48F (9C)
Manila	Partly Cloudy	89F (32C)	74F (23C)
Melbourne	Sunny	66F (19C)	53F (12C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	80F (27C)	68F (20C)
New York City	Cloudy	57F (14C)	42F (6C)
Osaka	Cloudy	39F (4C)	22F (-6C)
Paris	Sunny	32F (0C)	23F (-5C)
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	47F (8C)	31F (-1C)
Rome	Snow	40F (4C)	24F (-4C)
Salem, Oregon	Sunny	56F (13C)	34F (1C)
San Francisco	Sunny	63F (17C)	47F (8C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	37F (3C)	20F (-7C)
Tokyo, Japan	Rain	43F (6C)	33F (1C)
Washington, DC	Cloudy	63F (17C)	45F (7C)

WIA takes center stage in SCC meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be holding its March general membership meeting at Aqua Resort's Raraina Restaurant tomorrow, March 3.

Registration will begin at 11:30am and the meeting will come to order at 12 noon. The meeting should last until 1:30pm and all members and guests are encouraged to attend this event. The fee to attend is only \$12 per person to cover the cost of the meal.

This month's guest speakers are Jesse Stein from the Workforce Investment Agency, Chuck Sayon of the American Memorial Park, and Pete Callaghan of the Veterans of Foreign War.

Stein will be discussing about the Workforce Investment Agency's capabilities in training and education through federal funding assistance programs. Stein will also explain how WIA aims to find out about the employment needs of the chamber members through understanding the difficulties of local workforce employment in hopes of bridging the gap in this issue.

Sayon will be giving an update on the 60th commemoration of the battle of Saipan to the business community while Callaghan will be discussing the upcoming activities of the Veteran's of Foreign War, which is around the same time of the 60th commemoration activities.

During the meeting, D & W and the Workforce Investment

Agency will be introduced before the general membership since they are the newest members of the chamber.

One of the benefits to being a member of the chamber is the reduced care premiums provided by HMO member PacifiCare

Asia Pacific. The SCC said that enrollment for this program is in March so interested members are encouraged to join the chamber

to avail of this benefit.

The chamber would also be holding its annual tax workshop on Thursday, March 4, at the Azucena II center of Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach. The half-day workshop is open to the public and the fees are \$20 for

chamber members and \$30 for non-members.

To find out more about the chamber's activities, to find out how you can become a member of the chamber, or if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting, call 233-7150.

DOL to meet with garment factories

The Department of Labor will be meeting with garment manufacturers to discuss issues relating to recently introduced emergency regulations that allow factories to retain their quotas or slots amid transfer of employees.

"The department wants to hold this dialogue to fully explain or clarify certain issues," said DOL spokesperson Donnalyn Castro.

The department last month issued an emergency regulation that aims to amend the mechanism for the reallocation of garment workers, as contained in the previous emergency policy that expired in January.

This, after findings that the previous rules which suspended the factory quota system to allow "flexible hiring" within the garment industry had resulted in factories losing their slots when their workers transferred to another company.

The new emergency regulations aim to clarify that, when an employee transfers from a company to another, the company gaining the employee must have an open position before hiring, and the employer losing the employee retains a position that can be filled within or without the Commonwealth.

It also provides that employers must first attempt to fill positions with resident workers, followed by nonresident workers on island before hiring from off-island. (*Liberty Dones*)

C U C

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Demon seeds

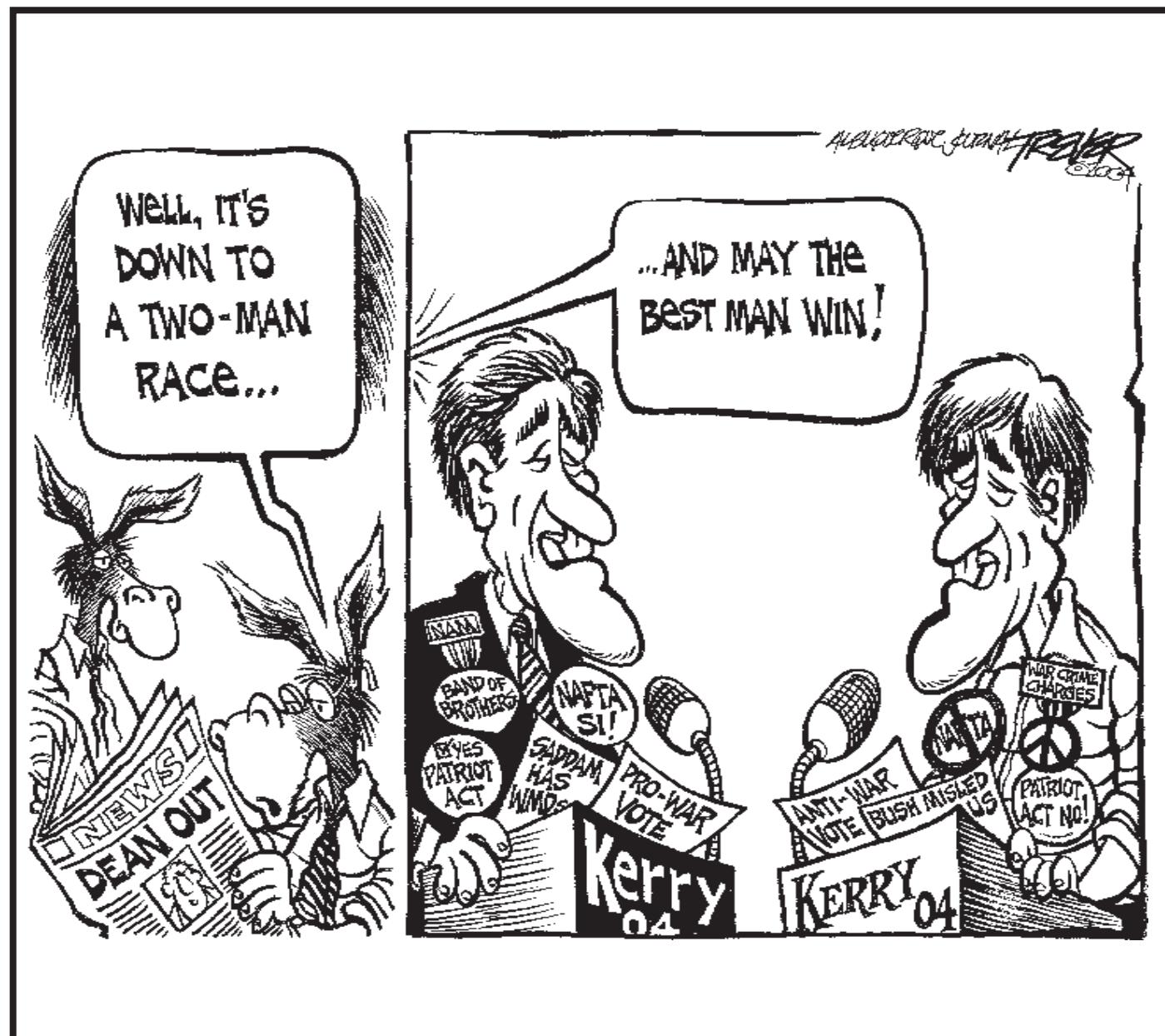
To date, there is no proof that food grown from genetically modified plants poses any danger to human health. On the contrary, so-called GM plants have the potential to feed more people than traditional crops and to contribute to a cleaner, pesticide-free environment. Nevertheless, the technology used to modify plant species is new, and there's a good deal still to be learned about it. Many of America's trading partners have not yet accepted it, preferring not to buy modified foods. For those reasons, it is in the interest of American farmers to maintain some supplies of traditional seed "uncontaminated" by engineered genes.

That may soon cease to be possible. In a report published last week, the Union of Concerned Scientists described tests carried out on supposedly unmodified corn, soy and canola seeds, all purchased commercially. Of 18 seed varieties tested, 16 seemed to contain some genetically engineered elements. How this DNA got there is unclear: Contamination could have come through pollen, could have been carried by the wind or could have occurred through the physical mixing of seeds. The depth of the problem is also unclear. This was a relatively small study, testing for a relatively limited range of modified DNA.

But the results are significant enough that they should interest the American food and agriculture industries, as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, all of which ought to have a strong interest in clarifying the situation. In part, the concerns are economic: If American exporters cannot guarantee that some part of their products are made from traditional seeds, they will soon lose markets in Europe and elsewhere. In the longer term, the concerns might be environmental as well.

The first reaction may be to ignore or dismiss a report that will frighten some consumers, both at home and abroad. But industry and government should not brush this issue aside. Both the USDA and the companies that grow grain and manufacture food products will be better off if they commission larger, more comprehensive studies of the nation's seed supply and start reviewing the wide range of regulations that govern sale and storage of seed. By accepting that this problem could be real and thinking in advance about how to solve it, the nation could avoid a much-larger scare.

(c) 2004, The Washington Post



John Kerry on the issues

We do not need to divide America over who served and how."—John Kerry, Feb. 27, 1992

As his campaign rolls on, Sen. John Kerry sat down the other day for a brief (and entirely fictional) interview about the issues. Sitting on his campaign plane tightly wedged between Vietnam veterans, the senator was at the top of his game and turned in an utterly characteristic performance. The transcript appears here exclusively:

Q: Senator, the Bush administration is advocating significant savings to try to rein in the federal budget. Is that a good idea?

A: This is a phony budget that doesn't make any real tough choices. And let me tell you, I know something about "savings." I saved Jim Rassmann's life in Vietnam. When he fell out of my Swift Boat, I single-handedly pulled him from the water, under fire, in an act that has forevermore stood—at least in my own supple and quite impressive mind—as a metaphor for my long career of making sacrifices and tough choices.

Q: Obviously, a key domestic issue this year is health care. Why are you the best candidate on this issue?

A: Look—heath care is very personal for me. The third time I was wounded in Vietnam, as I felt the hot metal coursing through my flesh, I realized then and there that the only solution to America's health care problem was a system that would allow ordinary people to have the same benefits as members of Congress, and give refundable tax credits for 50 percent of the cost of health coverage for small businesses and their employees.

Q: Senator, the Vietnam War is often a subtle undercurrent to your campaign, and some Democrats have been criticizing President Bush for serving in the Texas Air National Guard. Are you making Vietnam an issue?

By RICH LOWRY
2004 King Features Syndicate

Rich Lowry is the author of the recently released book "Legacy: Paying the Price for the Clinton Years."



A: No. I have always said, across my long, distinguished career of public service, that I would never judge the choices of anyone during the Vietnam War. Not those who chose to burn their draft cards. Not those who chose to flee to Canada. Not those who chose to drop acid and commit public sex acts. Not even those cowardly weasels who chose to serve in the National Guard.

When I was maneuvering through the Mekong Delta, and the jungle heat was nearly intolerable, some of my comrades in arms would say, "I hate those cowardly pantywaists who stayed home to serve in the National Guard." And I would say to my men as we dodged incoming fire: "No. No! We are here risking our lives every single hour of every single day in order to defend the freedom and security of even those cowardly weasels back home in the National Guard."

Q: On a lighter note. Everyone is still talking about the "wardrobe malfunction" during the Super Bowl.

A: Well, I'm not the best one to ask. [Chuckles] As you know, for a brief, but significant part of my life, the only wardrobe I had was a khaki uniform and a machine gun at the ready.

Q: Thank you, Senator.

A: Funny you say that. Jim Rassmann told me exactly the same thing.

Embryonic stem cell research isn't worth the high price

By CARDINAL WILLIAM H. KEELER
Special to the Baltimore Sun

People in our time are understandably dazzled by advances in science and technology. But this makes it all the more important to step back at times and ask whether the latest "advance" isn't really a step backward for humanity.

The news that South Korean scientists have cloned human embryos, and created a stem cell line from one of them, has revived exaggerated hopes about human cloning as a "therapeutic" technique. A dose of realism is in order.

Research in mouse embryonic stem cells is a quarter of a century old and has not produced safe and effective treatments for major illnesses in mice. Stem cells from human embryos have been studied for five years and are nowhere near human clinical trials for several reasons, including their tendency to form tumors when placed in animals.

Stem cells from cloned embryos are expected to pose additional risks and problems of their own. Some countries, such as Australia, have banned human cloning for research purposes after their top stem cell scientists concluded that it is unnecessary for progress in cell therapies.

What about the other side of the ledger, the moral and human cost of this "advance"?

Sixteen women were given potentially dangerous fertility drugs to force their ovaries to produce about 15 eggs at a time instead of one. These eggs were subjected to the cloning procedure used to make Dolly the sheep, creating 213 cloned embryos at the two-celled stage. Thirty survived to the one-week-old blastocyst stage, and the inner cells were successfully harvested from 20, but only one embryonic stem cell line was created. That's 16 women treated as mere egg factories and over 200 developing human lives created and discarded, to make one cell line that will probably never be used to treat anyone.

The process may become more efficient in the future but will always require exploiting women for their eggs and creating and destroying many human embryos to treat each patient—if it provides treatments at all.

Some will disagree with my conviction that a human embryo should be treated as having the same fundamental right to life as any human person. But most of us should agree that we are dealing here with no mere clump of cells. The week-old embryo is simply the being that each of us once was. Boards of experts advising presidents of both major political parties have concluded that this embryo is a developing form of human life that deserves respect. To manufacture these developing lives in the laboratory solely to destroy them for their cells is the opposite of respect.

Note also that such research inevitably facilitates what almost everyone opposes: the production of cloned children. Whatever the researchers' original purpose, posting their study on the Internet provides a "how-to" manual for anyone who wants to pursue human cloning for reproduction, including the UFO cult members who say they were told by aliens to reproduce in no other way.

A national ban on human cloning for any purpose has been approved twice by the House of Representatives and endorsed by President Bush. It deserves approval by the Senate now. Passage of such a ban would not disrupt medical progress.

The best-kept secret in this debate is that stem cells from adult cells and umbilical cord blood are already alleviating suffering and disease in patients with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, sickle-cell anemia, spinal cord injury and other conditions. A human science worthy of the name will allow hope to be tempered by realism and allow technology to be guided by moral norms to produce therapies we can all live with.

Keeler is archbishop of Baltimore and chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Saipan Tribune

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The Pacific Islands Bilingual Bicultural Movement

Whenever I hear this verse sung: "The winds blow chance from across the sea. Calling forth the islands of PIBBA's family. And so we gather in knowledge, friendship and smile. Of languages and cultures a tribute to our isles. Iokwe, Rananim, Kasilehlia, Ali'i, Aloha, Olomwaay, Hāfa Adai, Tohwo, Mogethin, Talofa" I get goose bumps, my fingers start to tingle, and that sensation moves on to my elbow and beyond. That's how moving the Pacific Islands Bilingual Bicultural Association (PIBBA) has been for me throughout the five years that I've actively served on Board for the CNMI Chapter, and two years on the International Board. Peter Onderera hit the nail right on the head when he wrote the lyrics, with Joey Franquez singing and playing the musical background. When one experiences PIBBA through its traveling conferences and reflects on this beautifully written melody, one can't help but get goose bumps, chills and tingling sensations. The whole experience is awesome.

What is PIBBA? It is a non-profit organization whose main goal is to promote and protect the indigenous Languages and Cultures. Initially, members from all of the entities in Micronesia and a couple from Polynesia got together at the annual conferences to address regional issues and challenges relating to language and culture. In their own respective entities, they established their own local chapter. Not only are there PIBBA officers at the local level, but at the international level as well.

The international PIBBA membership includes the Federated States of Micronesia: Kosrae State, Chuuk State, Pohnpei State and Yap State; Republic of Belau; Republic of the Marshall Islands; Government Guam; Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Government; and American Samoa.

At the local level, local chapters collaborate with their government and private sectors to strengthen the usage of their language and culture, and address local and regional issues and challenges. The CNMI Chapter, is no different. It continues to collaborate with the Public School System, Chamorro Carolinian Language Policy Commission, Carolinian Affairs Office, and Department of Community and Cultural Affairs to promote and protect the Chamorro and Carolinian Languages and Cultures.

In the past, the local PIBBA organization has sponsored workshops on teaching strategies, assessment, reading, writing, language planning, listening and comprehension skills, and participates in the annual conferences as facilitators and presenters. Many of its members are active community leaders in the Pacific Region for the past two decades of its existence. PIBBA meetings and conferences enable members to express themselves in areas of bilingualism and bicultural education at special forums.

Every year PIBBA members get together to share ideas on bilingualism and biculturalism at their annual conferences. This year the 23rd PIBBA Conference will be hosted by the PIBBA, Pohnpei Chapter. Traditionally, the conferences are held on the last week of June. At the conferences, PIBBA members vote on the officers at the international level. The entity where the International President is from determines where the next conference will be hosted. The 23rd PIBBA Conference will be held on Pohnpei with Kolden E. Manuel presiding as PIBBA, International President (July 2003 to June 2004). His officers for this term are Flowerpot T. Salas – PIBBA International President-Elect of American Samoa (residing on Rota), Dr. Jose Q. Cruz of Guahan – Treasurer, and Frances M. Sablan of the CNMI - Secretary. Thus, the 24th PIBBA

By FRANCES M. SABLAM

The views expressed are strictly that of the author. Sablan is the coordinator for the Public School System's Advanced Development Institute.



Conference will be hosted by American Samoa in June 2005.

For the past twenty-three years, the CNMI had its share of hosting the PIBBA conferences with its local pioneers, the promoters of local languages and cultures serving as International Presidents. They are Henry I. Sablan, Manny K. Villagomez (deceased), Dr. Rita Hocog-Inos, Florine M. Hofschneider, William I. Macaranas and Frances M. Sablan. Other local pioneers who served as PIBBA International Officers in the past are Carmen S. Taimaño, Dr. Rita Hocog-Inos, and Jesus M. Elameto. PIBBA Conferences held in the CNMI through the years were the 5th, 12th and 22nd conferences on Rota, 14th and 19th conferences on Saipan. Hopefully Tinian will be able to host the next conference in the CNMI.

The PIBBA, CNMI Chapter continues to raise funds to promote bilingual and bicultural activities. The main fundraiser this year is a raffle drawing and dinner show slated for May 29, 2004, Saturday, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Minachom Åtado. More than \$3,000.00 worth of prizes including cash, goods and appliances will be raffled. The Grand Prize is \$1,000.00, Baby Grand Prize is \$700.00, plus fifteen other great prizes. You can purchase your raffle tickets from one of the PIBBA, CNMI Chapter Board of Directors, members or one of the following officers: Jesus M. Elameto – President, Ling I. Marciano – Vice President, Saipan, Magdalena Mesngon – Vice President, Rota, Diana H. Borja – Vice President, Tinian, Carmen S. Taimaño – Treasurer, and Frances M. Sablan - Secretary. Please support PIBBA in assisting our children and community maintain and promote our indigenous languages and cultures: Chamorro and Carolinian.

Part of the proceeds of this year's fundraisers will sponsor 3 students from Saipan, Tinian and Rota to participate in upcoming Chamoru Poetry Recitation Competition on Guam on March 9th as part of the UOG Charter Day activities. CNMI students from grades 6-12 are invited to participate in the competition. In meeting the January 30, 2004 deadline, the following students were selected to participate in this event: Joshua Duenas (Saipan), Vincent V. Sablan (Tinian), and Lucille Barcina Hocog (Rota). Vice President Marciano and Secretary Sablan will be representing PIBBA at the competition as judges. Other projects the local chapter is pursuing are: developing supplemental resources and materials for the bilingual classes, sponsoring local competitions on language and culture, just to name a few.

If you are a CNMI resident who is interested in promoting and protecting the Chamorro and Carolinian languages and cultures, you are invited to become a member and participate in the PIBBA, CNMI Chapter activities. The PIBBA, CNMI Chapter meets every other Thursday throughout the year. It will meet again on March 11, 25, April 8, 22, May 6, and 20. As the annual conference draws closer, the meetings are scheduled weekly in June (3rd, 10th and 17th) at the Oleai Beach Bar and Grill from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. **Your indigenous culture needs you! Join now!**

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

In defense of Tom

As a Kagman farm plot lessee I feel the public needs to be aware and informed of the situation regarding the Kagman commercial farm plots. First of all the original intent of the program is to promote local commercial farmers. The plots are to be used for farming, not to let sit idle and unused or used as a "license" to collect money from "subcontractors." Regulations/rules/laws such as distribution of commercial water must be adhered to, to fairly accommodate all farmers and not surreptitiously "taken" by certain members. Are there workers whose DOLI status is in noncompliance?

Translated manuals

It was a very nice (and necessary) gesture on the part of Century Insurance in coming up with the translated versions of the CNMI driver's license handbook! I congratulate them! However, a question remains. Why only Chinese, Korean, and Bangladeshi translations? Comparatively speaking, few Chinese workers drive; even fewer Bangladeshi workers drive; a good number of Koreans that reside here drive, I must admit.

The big question is: Why is there no Tagalog translation for Filipino workers? This group is the largest, and most likely, to own cars and drive on the streets of the CNMI. I feel this is a great injustice to the largest group of overseas workers in the CNMI. My wife recently passed her driver's license examination and received her driver's license but not without great difficulty due to not

understanding some of the less common English terms used in the English Driver's Manual.

I believe "someone" should translate the manual to Tagalog for the Filipino community. It shouldn't be a difficult task. And while I have your attention, why should the government stop at the driver's license manual translation? Why not give driver's written examinations in the other languages, especially Tagalog. My wife had much more difficulty with the written examination than the English drivers manual. It is done in the U.S. mainland everywhere: Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, etc. Why not here?

Name withheld upon request

Cleaned up site becomes dump again

By JOHN RAVEL
REPORTER

Jun Agda, one of the volunteers who participated in restoring the old Saipan airport from being an illegal dumpsite, could not help uttering an invective upon learning that the site has deteriorated to become an illegal dumpsite—again.

His voice was evident with dismay, as he recalled the sacrifices of volunteers who woke up early in the morning on Sundays to participate in the cleanup project.

"People should learn. They should not always rely on volunteers," Agda said. "Until now, some people just don't learn."

Scattered piles of trash fill portions of the old airport. At the As



Gonno area within the old airport, the Division of Environmental Quality even discovered improperly disposed dye or paint.

DEQ public information officer Florence Calvo said the amount of the waste was significant. She said some plastic bags containing the waste have spilled out.

The DEQ wants the public to help the agency identify the entity responsible for improperly dumping the paint in As Gonno. The DEQ has begun soliciting paint samples from some companies to ascertain the responsible party.

The Environmental Interagency Cleanup Operation Team and volunteers conducted a major cleanup of the old airport sometime last year. The project, which gathered trailers of trash from the site, took several weekends to complete.

CHANCES

From Page 1

the CNMI by House Resource Committee members, as well as significant lobbying by Tenorio to influential Washington D.C. policymakers on the need for a CNMI delegate.

At the congressional hearing, the Tinian senator said he was put before a panel where California Rep. George Miller, who formerly authored federal takeover legislation of the CNMI, questioned him on several issues.

"He questioned the integrity of changes in the future about minimum wage, and alien labor in the Commonwealth. But I told him that the administration and my leadership in the Senate, the House, and also the Wash. Rep are sitting down nowadays [to talk of these issues]. Chances of changing, lifting the cap, minimum wage, it's not going to be [happen] unless the administration and the Legislature agree on it," explained Adriano.

He observed that Miller seemed satisfied with his answers. "And I think perhaps he's going to be supporting the bill also. He has been the biggest critic but not at this time when he was at the hearing."

The oversight hearing conducted by congressman Pombo's committee was for the purpose of gathering information on whether it would a good move to reintroduce the nonvoting delegate bill. The legislation was once floated in the U.S. Congress but was defeated.

"The committee learned more about the Marianas when they came. They said this in the hearing, that when they visited the Marianas, they had so many information they gathered when they were here," said Adriano, referring to the recent congressional visit that Pombo's panel made to the CNMI last January 2004.

The delegate bill will reportedly be sponsored by Pombo himself, according to Adriano.

CNMI leaders who testified before the panel in support of the nonvoting

delegate initiative included Adriano, the governor and the resident representative to the nation's capital.

Chairman Pombo said the committee will continue for the benefit of everybody to gather more information...they will be writing to us [if they have] any more questions."

Tenorio, who was featured on the second panel, said he appreciates the committee members who recognize that the CNMI's quest for a delegate is about justice and equity.

"This issue is about fairness and equality, and I feel like that really resonated with the committee members. Granting a Delegate is in keeping with the principles of American democracy," Tenorio remarked.

Also present for the hearing were CNMI senators Luis P. Crisostomo, Thomas P. Villagomez, Joseph M. Mendiola, and Henry H. San Nicolas, and Rep. Janet U. Maratita.

"I am so impressed that we had members of all three of our political parties and both houses of our legislature representing the wishes of the people at this hearing. We may not be able to agree on everything, but on the delegate issue we all agree that it is the overwhelming desire of our people," said Tenorio.

Maratita said she attended the oversight hearing to demonstrate her commitment to work with Tenorio and the administration, and to support the House Joint Resolution that the lower chamber had passed asking Congress to grant the CNMI delegate status.

"I am so glad that I could witness this historic hearing for myself and my constituents. I learned a lot about the congressional process involved and was glad to discuss health issues and 'stateless' persons with Congressman Dan Burton," said Maratita.

Villagomez added: "I have come to DC many times for hearings, and I believe that everything now looks favorable for this issue. The fact that Congressman Miller offered to work with us is very positive."

MPLA

From Page 1

committee discussions relating to Atalig's nomination. This, even as the minority senator is not a member of the EAGI panel.

Some Senate members, including Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano,

are opposed to Atalig's confirmation as Finance chief due to the latter's financial arrears with MPLA.

Demapan-Castro explained that an MPLA board action almost two years ago approved a recommendation to restructure Atalig's account, upon the latter's request.

"Because the board approved the

Present for the hearing were Chairman Richard Pombo (R-California), Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam), Donna Christensen (D-US Virgin Islands), Jeff Flake (R-Arizona), Dennis Rehberg (R-Montana), George Miller (D-California), and Joe Baca (D-California).

Their questions focused on the economic and social benefits a delegate would bring to the CNMI. Members applauded recent CNMI policies regarding immigration and labor, yet they expressed concern that these policies may be reversed by future local administrations.

Tenorio conceded that proving past labor and immigration problems are being addressed appropriately remains the CNMI's biggest challenge to securing a delegate. "It is not enough to say that the CNMI is taking steps to make improvements on labor and immigration," Tenorio said. "Congress wants to see tangible and lasting examples of these improvements."

Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Interior David Cohen, who was joined by Federal Ombudsman for Interior James Benedetto, served on the first panel.

Cohen said that the Bush administration "continues to support the general concept that the CNMI should be represented" in Congress.

The third panel included insular affairs expert Ruth Van Cleve, former Director of the Office of Territorial and International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Interior. Van Cleve said that a CNMI nonvoting delegate in the House would be a "win-win" for not only the House, but the Congress as a whole.

"This is just the beginning," said Tenorio. "I look forward to continuing this legislative push in the coming months. For native Chamorros, Carolinians and other Americans on the CNMI, the nonvoting delegate represents the fulfillment of our American dream. After almost 18 years of being American citizens, now is the time to grant CNMI citizens representation in the legislative body of our nation."

(with WRO release)

staff's recommendation to restructure the account, the payment terms of the 1996 Promissory Note are effectively replaced," she told Reyes.

According to Demapan-Castro, there was also an agreement two years ago to negotiate for an alternative collateral in order to reduce the interest

SENATE

From Page 1

Hofschneider confirmed yesterday that Atalig still owes the agency some \$36,350.80 as of Feb. 26, 2004. The amount represents the balance that Atalig, as then Marianas Public Lands Corp. board member, incurred when he used an MPLA-issued corporate credit card "for personal purchases."

Hofschneider affirmed Atalig has been making small payments.

"I was the chairman of the committee when we confirmed Secretary Fermin [Atalig as Commerce chief] on Rota. At that time, he assured me he would settle his obligations at MPLA," Adriano shared.

A few days before heading to Washington D.C. for the congressional hearing before the U.S.

STATELESS

From Page 1

"He has asked his two immediate staff to help the stateless kids in the Commonwealth...to explore ways and means...so they can proceed to sponsor a bill or any other resolution that will assist these stateless kids in the Commonwealth. The chances of having this bill again is high," the Senate president told reporters yesterday.

Adriano noted that, with the possibility of a 'stateless' bill in sight, the Washington D.C. trip was generally a success.

Burton last week presided over a congressional hearing tackling pressing CNMI health issues.

The governor, prior to attending the hearing in Washington D.C., apprised the U.S. congressman about the unique 'stateless' issue involving over 200 individuals born in the CNMI to alien parents between 1978 and 1986.

In a letter to Burton, Babauta had assured that conferring them citizenship would not create "any loophole or any other manner of special unforeseen general benefit because this is a closed group."

The governor clarified that the CNMI's

charge and to secure Atalig's account.

The chairwoman claimed that the board-approved payment terms are different from what MPLA Commissioner Hofschneider had reported to the Saipan senator.

In a separate letter dated March 1, Demapan-Castro chided Hofschneider for

House of Resources Committee, however, the Tinian senator disclosed that he confirmed the existence of Atalig's arrears.

"It's just too bad, and it's unfortunate. It's not the right time for him to go before the Senate. I'm saying right now that I'll have to ask the governor to withdraw his name, for everybody's interest. To save everyone a headache, it's better that the governor withdraw his name as Secretary of Finance and put him back to Commerce," Adriano said.

The Senate presiding officer stressed that he means "no harm or offense" against the Commerce secretary.

"But I think he should not be there. The record will speak for itself. So I just hope that this thing will stop and let's find a person to serve in that capacity and we'll move on," said Adriano.

'stateless' individuals—reportedly numbering over 200—only include those born between the time the Covenant was developed and fully ratified.

"Due to circumstances caused by the differing dates of the Covenant between the CNMI and U.S. being adopted and the United Nations and U.S. granting full status to the document, certain residents, born in the CNMI during that period of transition, were not granted citizenship," Babauta told Burton, a member of the House Committee on Government Reform.

The chief executive noted that these individuals are now aged 18-28 and have always resided and attended schools in the CNMI, and have family and relations here.

"Despite the fact that they have grown up with other members of the American family, without a grant of citizenship, they consider themselves 'stateless.' This fact has caused them great harm in securing employment, educational opportunities, even social benefits," Babauta said.

Babauta had appealed to Burton to assist the individuals attain U.S. citizenships owing to their unique situation.

reportedly forwarding information to Reyes without seeking the board's final approval.

The chairwoman asked that the commissioner provide an explanation why he allegedly disregarded the board's instructions on this matter. Demapan-Castro is expecting an answer by March 11, 2004.

Mayor Tudela joins Covenant Party

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela has officially announced his intention to run for reelection under the Covenant Party.

Speaking before a crowd of more than 100 supporters at a Covenant Party general membership meeting last Sunday, Tudela announced that he has officially submitted his letter of intent to Covenant Party officials and resigned from the CNMI Democratic Party.

"It's coming from my heart," said Tudela, when asked why he

decided to join the Covenant Party. "Many Covenant party members also supported me in the last election."

Tudela also indicated that the Covenant Party is a rapidly growing party, saying it is probably the strongest political party in the CNMI right now.

"I don't want to come in too late," said Tudela, who maintains that there are "no hard feelings" between him and the Democratic Party, which reportedly has another candidate for mayor of Saipan in mind.



Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela speaks during the general membership meeting of the Covenant Party, soon after signifying his intention to run for reelection under the Covenant banner.

Covenant Party officials, meanwhile, have accepted Tudela as their candidate for Saipan's mayor in the upcoming 2005 general elections.

"I really appreciate Mayor Tudela," said Felipe Roberto, a senior advisor to the Covenant Party. "Everybody is welcome to the party, no matter where they come from," he added.

At least two Covenant Party officials, Vicente M. "Pacho" Sablan, a former House Speaker, and Gregorio "Katsuma" Sablan, a retired police officer

and former DPS commissioner, previously expressed interest in running for Saipan mayor but graciously stepped aside in favor of incumbent Tudela for the benefit of the party.

"I feel very confident," said an upbeat Tudela, "I believe people can see what I have accomplished during my administration as mayor."

Many Covenant Party officials regard Tudela's decision to run under the green banner as a major accomplishment for the party.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MARCH AS WOMEN'S MONTH

Acting Governor Diego T. Benavente proclaimed March 2004 as "CNMI Women's History Month", and March 6, 2004 as "CNMI International Women's Day" at the Proclamation Signing Ceremony yesterday, which was coordinated by the Office of Women's Affairs.



COURTESY CALL

Representatives from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Marianas Visitors Authority, and the Commonwealth Ports Authority recently paid a visit to Captain Dale Rausch, the Commander Coast Guard Marianas Section in Guam. From left, Fred Taitague, Tony Cabrera, David Sablan, Alex Sablan, Capt. Dale Rausch, Commander Michael Tosatto, Tony Camacho, and Carlos Salas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MISS GUAM 2004

Russchel Seballos was crowned Miss Guam Tourism 2004 at a pageant on Wednesday, Feb. 25 held at the SandCastle, Tumon Guam

EDUARDO C. SIGUENZA



HAFA ADA!

Saipan Chamber of Commerce President Alex Sablan meets with Admiral A.J. Johnson, the Rear Admiral of the United States on Friday, February 27, 2004 at the US Naval Forces Marianas in Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



OUTTA MY WAY

San Vicente Elementary School MY WAVE Club members cleaned nearly 40 cars under the sun during last week's car wash fund-raiser at Shell Airport Road station. The club members were at work from 10am to 2:30pm and were able to raise \$344 for their group's tourism-related activities. The event was organized by the Marianas Tourism Education Council in coordination with Shell Marianas at SVES.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

CNMI cadets prepare for drill competition

The CNMI cadets are looking forward to the Guam Drill competition scheduled for March 19-20, 2004 on Guam.

Since the acceptance of the invitation to participate last month, the cadets have been practicing extensively at the Marianas High School campus during lunch hours, after school each day and on Saturdays. Rain or shine, the cadets are out there practicing.

The CNMI cadets will be competing in the regular armed and unarmed drill with team composition comprising of representative of the five JROTC Programs (Rota, Tinian, Kagman, Saipan Southern and Marianas). Each program will separately represent their respective schools in the four cadet color guard team competition.

Army instructors training and coaching these teams and representing their schools for the color guard competition are: SFC Pedro Gloria for Marianas High School; SFC Richard Haugh, Saipan Southern; MSG James Burke, Kagman; CPT Joseph Santos,

Tinian; and MSG Juan Salas, Rota.

Army instructor overall in-charge and overseeing the combined CNMI regulation armed and unarmed drill teams is SGM Joaquin O. Kiyoshi from Saipan Southern High.

C/CPT Alvin Borja is the Cadet Commander for unarmed team, while C/LTC Antonio Camacho is Cadet Commander for the armed team.

The Color guard commanders for each school are:

C/LTC Antonio Camacho Kagman
C/CPT Tristan Ecal - Saipan Southern

C/ISG Frank Sablan - Marianas
C/ILT Edwin Orilla - Rota
C/ILT Vincent Aguon - Tinian
CSM Doroteo Q. Aguigui is the CNMI MSU JROTC Operations & Liaison Officer.

CNMI cadets practice extensively at the Marianas High School campus during lunch hours, after school each day and on Saturdays.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Registration open for arts fest

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture will be holding the 23rd Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival on April 16, 17 and 18, 2004 at the American Memorial Park-west of Bell Tower.

Registration for booths will be open tomorrow, March 3, from 8am to 4:30pm and will be closed for registration on April 5, 2004.

The festival includes booths for

Year later, Fiji villagers await cyclone relief

SUVA, Fiji (FijiSUN/PIR)—More than a year after Cyclone Ami ravaged Vanua Levu and other areas of Fiji, relief supplies have still not arrived.

Residents of Nabekavu, Waiqele in Labasa are still awaiting rehabilitation materials to repair their cyclone-damaged houses.

Waiqele Advisory Councillor, Rajendra Rao, is calling for something to be done immediately.

"Many of these people are living in temporary built sheds and their living conditions worsen during rainfall," Mr. Rao said.

Despite many visits and promises by the District Officer Northern, Mr. Rao said nothing was being done.

"A list of all the affected people had been supplied to the District Officer shortly after the cyclone in January last year and a team from the District Administration carried out the survey."

Mr. Rao said he has even submitted new lists of people wanting help but all he received was that they would visit the place to take a look.

"Recently building materials have been supplied to some people at Waiqele and in other parts of Vanua Levu where cyclone Ami had struck and caused devastation."

However he added that more were still sitting in the bulk.

"An early supply of the rehabilitation materials to the left out people would be much appreciated."

housing traditional crafts and contemporary artist displaying, selling, and demonstrating their art works. There will be booths for food vendors and some for information purposes only.

The council is also asking the general public—mainly performers and entertainers who are interested to perform at this festival—to call or visit its office on Capital Hill (next to the Post Office) and register.

Registrants will have the opportunity to select a good location for their booth based on a first-come first-served basis and the submission of the payment and necessary documents.

Interested individuals may contact the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs/Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture at 322-9982/83 for more information.

Pag-IBIG refund now available

Pag-IBIG overseas program members from 1996 to January 1998 can now apply for a refund of their total contributions plus the 3-percent dollar interest tax-free.

"Just fill out a refund application form and you will receive your refund in U.S. dollars. After getting your refund, you can be a member again by submitting a new pop membership form and contribute a minimum of \$5.00 per month," according to a Pag-IBIG statement.

For a minimum contribution of \$5 a month, former members can also activate their Pag-IBIG membership

also in the Philippines using the same Pag-IBIG ID number.

"Your contribution will be converted into Philippine pesos using the current conversion rate and it will earn a 7.5-percent peso interest. After 25 to 30 years from your initial contribution, you are entitled to a refund in Philippine peso of all your contribution including interest tax-free," the agency said.

For more information, call the Pop Saipan Office at 235-4749 or visit the Pop Office at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe and look for information officer Lynell F. Fulgencio.

Guam demonstrators remember Bikini blast

HAGATNA, Guam (PDN/PIR)—Anti-nuclear activists held a demonstration yesterday in remembrance of those who lost their health and lives to nuclear bombs in the Pacific.

Fifty years ago yesterday, the U.S. military detonated the 15-megaton hydrogen bomb "Bravo," with the force of 1,000 Hiroshima bombs, on a tiny atoll in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

The military evacuated the residents of Bikini atoll in the Marshall Islands before destroying it, but just hours before the detonation, high-altitude winds shifted east, and those winds carried radioactive dust and other fallout to islands hundreds of miles away, Pacific Daily News files state.

Within hours, hundreds of those

islanders, as well as U.S. weather observers and Japanese fishermen in the area, were suffering from burns, nausea, diarrhea, itching, peeling skin, sores and lost hair and nails, files state.

That explosion was neither the first nor the last nuclear experiment the U.S. government would carry out in the Pacific during the Cold War, but it was probably the most devastating in the Marshalls, said Fanai Castro, an indigenous rights activist and one of the organizers of today's demonstration.

Castro said the event yesterday is intended to remember those affected by Bravo and other bombs in the Pacific, and also to advocate for the end of all nuclear testing.

PACIFIC Brief

Cyclone brushes New Caledonia, moves south

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—Cyclone Ivy moved south from Vanuatu and has passed over New Caledonia, causing only minor damage.

The Meteorological office in Noumea says the cyclone moved south east of New Caledonia.

It was heading out over the South Pacific Ocean in the direction of New Zealand.

New Zealand, meanwhile, was helping Vanuatu compile a damage report after the cyclone left major damage and the loss of at least one life in the island chain.

A New Zealand Air Force Orion has been sent to survey the damage.

Communications between Vanuatu's outer islands and the main island, Efate, have been disrupted and a survey from the air will help close the information gap.

Solomons, PNG to sign border agreements

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands will finalize several treaties and agreements at a two-day meeting of senior officials due to start in Port Moresby tomorrow.

Foreign Affairs and Immigration Minister Rabbie Namaliu said in a statement last night that earlier discussions on border arrangements and signing of a basic border agreement between the Melanesian neighbors in July 1997 had not been enforced because the Solomon Islands Government has yet to ratify the treaty.

Sir Rabbie said that on Feb 25, the Cabinet approved recommendations to ratify the treaties and arrangements relating to the management of the common border area.

The other agreements to be discussed include a framework treaty guiding relations between the two countries and its subsidiary arrangements, a boundary delimitation treaty, a memorandum of under-

standing on joint surveillance, technical cooperation between the two countries, political and security issues and well as other regional and international issues of common interest.

Taro shortage looms on Niue

ALOFI, Niue (Niue News/PIR)—Agriculture officials in Niue are warning of a shortage of taro and other root root crops in the coming months.

The island has experienced a long dry spell since it was devastated by Cyclone Heta in early January.

Most Niuean families maintain a plantation of taro for home consumption while a small number of farmers grow the famous pink taro for export to New Zealand.

Officials predict there will be a shortage of taro, the island's major root crop, within three months.

All imported food, frozen vegetables and groceries come from New Zealand on a cargo ship which visits the island every three weeks.

Solomons police seek recruits under new standards

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (SIBC/PIR)—New police recruits under the current recruitment exercise will have to meet physical fitness, clean police record, writing ability and of good health and must have successfully completed Form Five education and above.

These are some of the criteria the recruitment exercise will be looking for when selecting new police officers.

The new police recruitment exercise campaign starts today with the aim of recruiting about 100 qualified police officers by June.

A statement from the Police says that as part of the campaign, an information and application package can be obtained from 13 police stations and posts throughout the country.

The new recruitment exercise would want to see as many applications from all the provinces for both male and females.

Business

Windows could lose media player in Europe

By ALLISON LINN
AP BUSINESS WRITER

SEATTLE (AP)—In the fall of 2002, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates stood on stage at Hollywood's Kodak Theater, home to the Academy Awards, and pronounced this "the digital decade."

By 2010, Gates told an audience that included director James Cameron and musician LL Cool J, everything from paying bills to seeing movies "will be done on a digital basis, and the PC with its magic software will play the central role."

He then proceeded to unveil what Microsoft considers a key part of that vision: a half-billion dollar upgrade to the Windows Media Player for music, movies and other digital content.

Eighteen months later, Gates' endeavor could be facing a big roadblock.

If Microsoft cannot settle an antitrust case brought by European Union regulators, the company may be ordered to remove Windows Media Player as an integrated feature of the dominant Windows operating system, at least for personal computers sold in Europe.

The European Commission also could order Microsoft to include rival media players with

Windows to make those products as easy for users to access as Microsoft's own music and video player.

Microsoft has said it is certain to appeal any ruling against it. Still, the European case could hinder Microsoft's efforts to dominate an emerging and important technology market.

"There's a lot at stake here, because it's becoming increasingly evident to most everyone that the computer is becoming more of a media-centric device," said Phil Leigh, an analyst with Inside Digital Media.

Removing the media player from Windows may help level the playing field for competitors such as RealNetworks' RealOne player and Apple's QuickTime, Leigh said, while also costing Microsoft its default advantage.

In the fierce competition for what type of technology people use to do things like listen to music and watch movies on computers, Microsoft's primary

weapon is its ability to ensure its format is found on millions of PCs every year, said Rob

European Union could throw a wrench in that."

A negative ruling also could

2006 or later, is scheduled to incorporate even more new features, such as a built-in search

features might become more likely if the EU forbade Microsoft from tying its media player to its operating system, Helm said.

The European regulators already have prepared a draft decision that finds Microsoft violated competition law on two counts: by bundling its media player into Windows, and by failing to provide rivals in the server market with enough information for their products to operate as well with Windows as Microsoft's own applications.

In addition to the penalties regarding the media player, the company also could be asked to pay hefty fines and to release more details on the blueprints for server software.

The EU has said it could decide the long-running case as early as this month.

Microsoft has said repeatedly it hopes to settle, but analysts believe there is only so much the company is willing to concede.



Helm, director of research for independent analysts Directions on Microsoft.

Now, he said, "the

weigh on Microsoft's planned next version of Windows, code-named Longhorn. That system, which may not be available until

engine that could compete with Google, Yahoo and other companies.

Legal battles over such

Netflix pioneer has a blockbuster plan

NETFLIX
LOS GATOS, Calif. (AP)—It would be easy to cast Netflix Inc. founder Reed Hastings as simply a dot-com rebel whose online DVD subscription service empowers consumers by letting them keep video rentals indefinitely without facing late fees.

But Hastings, a former Peace Corps volunteer who once taught math in Swaziland, says he is pursuing a far nobler cause.

Hastings sees himself as a DVD evangelist, with Netflix a bully pulpit for his mission to deepen the world's passion for movies and find an audience for every film.

"I would like Netflix to transform the movie business," Hastings says without the slightest trace of bombast. "We want to become a Top 10 media company."

It sounds like a like a far-fetched ambition for an industry upstart that started this year with a 3 percent share of the \$9.9 billion video rental market, and stiffer competition from retail giants Blockbuster Entertainment and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. looming ahead.

Hastings, 43, isn't

backing down, perhaps because he has already defied conventional thinking.

"He's the kind of guy you would back in a heartbeat because he is such a brilliant strategic thinker," said Jay Hoag, whose venture capital firm, Technology Crossover Ventures, was among Netflix's early backers.

Skepticism has been shadowing Hastings since his 1999 launch of Netflix, which charges an all-you-can-watch monthly fee of \$19.95 to receive up to three DVDs at a time through the mail.

Critics quickly panned Hastings' smorgasbord approach as another dot-com blunder. The service instead struck a nerve with tech-savvy movie lovers fed up with video late fees—a cash cow that industry leader Blockbuster Entertainment milked for about 15 percent of its revenue before Netflix came along.

Now Los Gatos-based Netflix is thriving, its audience rapidly approaching 2 million subscribers as the service attracts about 125,000 new customers each month, helped by software that personalizes movie recommendations based

on customers' viewing histories and their feedback on films they've seen.

The company's accelerating growth has helped its stock more than quadruple in less than two years despite persistent doubts about Netflix's ability to survive tougher competition and a long-anticipated shift to video-on-demand.

Meanwhile, consumers are renting fewer movies from Blockbuster, a trend that recently prompted majority owner Viacom Inc. to seek a buyer for its 81 percent stake in the 8,900-store video rental chain.

Even before Netflix, Hastings established himself as a shrewd entrepreneur.

In the early 1990s, he started a business software maker, Pure Atria, that he wound up selling to Rational Software for \$752 million in stock. Hastings then came up with the idea for Netflix when he returned a rented copy of the movie "Apollo 13" more than a week late and got slapped with a \$39 penalty.

It may turn out to be the best money Hastings ever spent, considering his personal stake in Netflix is worth nearly \$150 million.



Hastings

Survey: Gas prices jump 6.9 cents

CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP)—Prices for all grades of gasoline rose 6.9 cents in the past two weeks to a national average of \$1.75 a gallon, according to a study released Sunday. But even with the boost, the cost was a penny below what it was at this time a year ago.

Since late December, the price of gas has gone up nearly 25 cents a gallon. The Lundberg survey of 8,000 stations nationwide was conducted Feb. 27.

Analyst Trilby Lundberg said there were several reasons for the latest spike, including a rise in crude oil prices and higher refinery costs.

The average price of gasoline in March 2003 was \$1.76, Lundberg said.

Gas prices jumped significantly in California, where many cities saw increases of 20 cents or more, Lundberg said. In San Diego, which had the highest gas prices in the nation, a gallon of self-serve regular cost

\$2.19, 27 cents higher than just two weeks ago, the report said.

California has strict environmental regulations and places sales tax on gas pumps, which amounts to an extra 3.5 cents a gallon, Lundberg said.

"We have the most clean and costly gas in the world," she said.

The national weighted average price of gasoline, including taxes, at self-serve pumps Friday was about \$1.72 for regular, \$1.82 for midgrade, and \$1.91 for premium.

Kuwait agrees to export Iraqi oil

KUWAIT CITY (AP)—Kuwait has agreed to export Iraqi oil from its ports and is considering a deal to import natural gas from Iraq, a senior official said Sunday.

This oil deal would be the first of its kind between the neighbors since the fall of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who invaded Kuwait and occupied it for seven months until it was liberated in the 1991 Gulf War.

Separately, the Kuwait Petroleum Corp. will start supplying Iraq with 3.6 million liters of gasoline a day in July.

The state-owned Kuwait News Agency quoted Issa al-

Aoun, the undersecretary of the Energy Ministry, as saying Kuwaiti oil officials and a visiting delegation of their Iraqi peers have formed a team to study the technical requirements needed for transporting Iraqi oil to Kuwait, including pipelines, tank farms and pumping stations.

Al-Aoun said new piers will be built for the project, which will benefit the "economies and the ties of the two countries" as well as the ties between their people. He did not provide any dates.

A draft for the agreement to supply Iraqi natural gas to Kuwait has been completed, and the feasibility study will be

ready by the beginning of May, said the official.

Kuwait is rich in oil but poor in natural gas. It is seeking to import gas to use for generating energy instead of oil.

In the first phase of the project, Kuwait would import some 35,000 cubic feet of gas a day. The quantity will increase in the second phase to reach 200 million cubic feet a day, according to al-Aoun.

In the gasoline deal, the state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corp. will "directly" export gasoline to Iraq starting in July. Al-Aoun said the Iraqis will have to talk to the U.S. Army about how to divide this quantity.

Two cell phone companies going national

By BRUCE MEYERSON
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Say goodbye to one national cell phone company, and hello to two more.

While the industry is hopeful that the buyout of AT&T Wireless by Cingular Wireless will ease competition by eliminating one national rival—and possibly more if the merger prompts more deals—two other telephone companies are poised to crowd the market with their own national wireless offerings.

Qwest Communications, the local phone company across the Rocky Mountains and Northwest, is expanding its regional cell service on Monday with the introduction of national coverage and calling plans.

The services will be provided over Sprint Corp.'s wireless network under the Qwest Wireless brand, which currently has nearly 1 million subscribers

Sprint returns to single common stock

OVERLAND PARK, Kan.

(AP)—Sprint Corp. announced Sunday that it will combine the company's two tracking stocks into a single common stock under the FON symbol on the New York Stock Exchange.

In 1998, the company created a tracking stock for its wireless business, Sprint PCS, which trades on the NYSE under the symbol PCS. Sprint has just over one billion PCS shares and about 906 million

on regional calling plans.

The Qwest launch comes only days after AT&T Corp., former parent of AT&T Wireless, asserted that it too would likely introduce a "virtual" mobile phone service using another company's network. The service would probably be sold under the AT&T Wireless brand, which

FON shares outstanding.

PCS common stock will be eliminated and each share of PCS common stock will be converted into one-half share of FON common stock on April 23, 2004, leaving about 1.4 billion total shares outstanding after the recombination.

In a news release, the communications company also said its board expects to declare the regular dividend of 12.5 cents per share on all

AT&T will regain control of after its former subsidiary is acquired by Cingular.

The moves by Qwest and AT&T offer further confirmation that the bundling of multiple services—telephone, Internet, wireless and video—on a single bill is becoming a must-have product in the telecommu-

nations business.

"Our focus is really on how can we offer the best telecommunications bundle to our customers, and wireless is an important part of that bundle," said Paul Golden, vice president of product management for Qwest. "That's how we need to compete in the market place."

In such an environment, some strategists question whether pure cellular businesses such as Nextel Communications and T-Mobile might be forced into mergers or at least an alliance with a non-wireless company such as AT&T or MCI.

For Sprint, which also serves as the behind-the-scenes carrier for a youth-marketed cell service called Virgin Mobile, the wholesale revenue from Qwest helps defray the hefty cost of operating a wireless network.

At the same time, it is unclear if the competition from yet another rival might intensify the price wars that Sprint and others are hoping might ease some with the departure of AT&T Wireless.

Fortunately for the competition, Qwest primarily views its new national coverage as a means to retain and attract customers within its home territory, so the company isn't planning to wage a coast-to-coast battle.

Prosecutors regroup in Stewart case

NEW YORK (AP)—Their most serious charge cast aside by a federal judge, prosecutors will zero in Monday on their accusation that Martha Stewart and her stockbroker cooked up a cover story for a 2001 stock sale.

The government will present its closing argument in the five-week trial, hoping to persuade a jury of eight men and four women to convict the domestic-style maven of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and lying to investigators.

The charges spring from Stewart's sale of 3,928 shares of ImClone Systems stock on Dec. 27, 2001—just before it declined sharply because of a negative government report on a company cancer drug.

The government says Stewart and broker Peter Bacanovic lied to cover up the true reason for the sale: Bacanovic had sent word to Stewart that ImClone CEO Sam Waksal was trying to sell his own shares.

But prosecutors have been stripped of the most serious count they brought against Stewart—a charge she lied to investors in her own media empire, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, by saying her ImClone sale was proper.

U.S. District Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum found there was not sufficient evidence that Stewart showed an intent to deceive investors when she issued three statements explaining the ImClone sale in June 2002.

When Stewart lawyer Robert Morillo makes his closing argument after the government's, the judge's ruling will allow him to streamline the remaining allegations for the jury, said Timothy Hoeffner, a Philadelphia attorney specializing in white-collar crime.



Alicia Romero, right, a Vons cashier for 13 years, talks to fellow workers as her family, from left, Anthony 12, carrying a respirator for Israel, and husband Caleb, Saturday, Feb. 28, 2004, before a meeting held at the Professional Musicians union hall in Los Angeles. AP

Calif. grocery workers vote on contract

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Grocery workers spent a second day Sunday voting on a tentative contract that could end a strike-lockout that has crippled Southern California shopping for nearly five months.

Thousands of members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union stood in lines at voting sites, ahead of the Sunday night voting deadline, said Barbara Maynard, a UFCW spokeswoman. Workers said the new offer requires them to pay for health benefits for the first time and includes a one-time bonus but no raise.

The tentative agreement covers 70,000 employees of Albertsons Inc., Kroger Co. and Safeway Inc. Since Oct. 11, about

59,000 workers have been on strike or locked out. The others continued working at other markets by special agreement while the contract was negotiated.

The 4 1/2-month dispute gained national attention because it was seen as a referendum on affordable employee health care. Presidential candidates John Kerry and John Edwards were among those who rallied behind the grocery workers.

Many employees were eager to return to their jobs and have said they voted to ratify the deal. However, they said the offer was not much different from one they received from their employers in October—one that was rejected by the union.

If union members approve

the deal, it could take several days to get people back to work, Maynard said.

"It simply takes time to schedule everyone," she said. "Some people may or may not go back."

It was unknown whether replacements workers would be immediately released if the contract was approved by union members.

The tentative agreement was reached between the stores and workers on Friday. Workers said the contract offer included a ratification bonus of 30 cents for every hour worked in the year before the strike-lockout began.

Under the expired contract, workers paid no monthly premiums for health benefits and a \$10 copay for doctor's

visits and prescriptions.

The new offer includes no premiums for the first two years of the contract. Beginning in the third year, however, workers would pay \$5 a week for individual coverage and \$15 a week for family coverage, according to a union fact sheet given to workers.

Employees said their copayments would increase to \$25 for a doctor's visit and \$100 for treatment at a hospital emergency room.

The proposed agreement separates current workers from those hired after Oct. 5, when the old contract expired. New employees would receive a lower wage rate, and it would take them longer to get raises, according to the fact sheet.

Nation

Search suspended in tanker blast

By SONJA BARISIC
AP WRITER

PORPSMOUTH, Va. (AP)—The Coast Guard on Sunday night suspended the search for 18 crew members missing from an ethanol-laden tanker that exploded in the Atlantic Ocean, and were unsure whether search efforts would resume Monday morning.

The Coast Guard will decide whether to continue the search after a crew flies over the area Monday morning, Chief Warrant Officer Gene Maestas said.

"Realistically, the longer the search goes on, the less likely it is that we will find anyone who is still alive," Rear Adm. Sally Brice-O'Hara, commander of the Coast Guard's 5th District, said at a news briefing earlier Sunday.

The Bow Mariner, a tanker carrying 3.5 million gallons of ethanol, exploded and sank Saturday night about 50 miles off Virginia's Eastern Shore. Three men died and six were rescued.

Three of the survivors were released Sunday from Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. The others were in good condition and could be released Monday morning, hospital spokeswoman Ann Keffer said.

Two Coast Guard workers were treated for minor injuries.

Coast Guard officials were investigating the cause of the explosion. Coast Guard spokeswoman Krys Hannum said there was no reason to believe it was anything other than an accident.

Two Coast Guard patrol boats, a helicopter and a C-130 airplane searched Sunday, but with water temperatures below 50 degrees, the likelihood of additional survivors being found grew increasingly slim.

Hannum said some of the crew members were sleeping at the time of the explosion and some were on deck, so it's unlikely that they were wearing

Crew comprised of 24 Filipinos and three Greeks

Oil-soaked survivors rescued in darkness

PORPSMOUTH, Va. (AP)—The ocean reeked of ethanol as Dave Foreman was lowered 75 feet from a Coast Guard helicopter to a life raft carrying survivors from a tanker that had exploded off of Virginia's coast.

Empty life vests, their rescue strobes still flashing, were scattered on the water, but even with the light the rescue swimmer had trouble making out the figures on the raft. They were so covered in fuel oil from the tanker not even the whites of their eyes were visible.

"It was something you would see in one of those horror movies, like 'Swamp Thing,'" Foreman said Sunday, a day after he and his Coast Guard crew rescued six men who may be the only survivors of the explosion. Three crew members died and 18 others were missing after the explosion of the tanker, which was carrying 3.5 million gallons of ethanol.

Foreman said he groped about for the survivors, then dragged and pulled them into his rescue basket, struggling to get a good grip on their oil-slickened bodies.

One at a time, the men were hoisted to the HH-60 helicopter. One man, thought to have a spinal injury, was tied to a backboard.

A hospital spokeswoman later said there did not turn out to be a spinal injury, but that the men had hypothermia and were contaminated with



The Bow Mariner, a chemical tanker sinks after an explosion off the coast of Virginia, Saturday, Feb 28, 2004.

petroleum. Three of the men were released from the hospital Sunday, and the other three were reported in good condition and could be released Monday.

The first two rescues went well, but the rest were trickier because the deck of the helicopter had become covered in oil, said Sam Pulliam, the helicopter's flight mechanic. The air became so thick with oil fumes it was hard to breathe, he said.

The survivors, all Filipinos,

spoke little to no English but gestured with their hands, Pulliam said.

"They were all very, very cold," Pulliam said. "They just wanted some blankets."

The survivors declined requests for interviews.

The helicopter's pilot, Lt. Eric Bader, said the men may have been reluctant to get into the rescue basket on their own because they were scared or didn't want to leave their shipmates behind.

Pulliam and Foreman were treated at a hospital because they had inhaled fumes and were contaminated with oil. Pulliam was released after a few hours; Foreman spent the night there but said he couldn't sleep.

"I was basically thinking there were other people out there," Foreman said. "That's the mentality of a rescue swimmer—he wants to save everybody."

woman Vicky Gray said of the rescued crewmen, who are Filipino and did not speak English. "They're very quiet,

gear that would protect them from the cold water.

The survivors were treated for conditions including

hypothermia and had to be decontaminated after being found covered with a petroleum-based substance.

"They look like they've been through an ordeal and they're very introspective about what happened," hospital spokes-

Fourth body found in Miss. river crash

PILOTTOWN, La. (AP)—Salvage crews have recovered the body of a fourth crew member killed when an offshore supply vessel collided with a container ship in the Mississippi River's only deep opening into the Gulf of Mexico.

The body of Daniel Lopez, 31, of Port Arthur, Texas, was recovered Saturday at a river pilot station about eight miles south of the Feb. 21 crash, said Petty Officer Chad Saylor, a Coast Guard spokesman.

The Lee III had five crew members aboard when it

crashed about 80 miles southeast of New Orleans in the Southwest Pass, the river's only shipping channel deep enough for many container and cruise ships. The search for the body of the fifth man continued Sunday. The container ship was damaged, but no one aboard was hurt.

The collision closed the river to large ships until Wednesday. A backlog of 155 ships delayed by the accident was cleared by Friday night, the Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard closed the Southwest Pass again Sunday as a crane lifted the sunken Lee III onto

a barge. Officials searched the raised vessel for the remaining crewman, Ramon Norwood, 27, of Galveston, Texas.

On Thursday, salvage crews recovered the bodies of Baldemar Villarreal Jr., 54, of Lake Jackson, Texas, and Joseph Harl Brown, 44, of Vidor, Texas. Divers had earlier retrieved the body of Lawrence Glass, 65, of Mobile, Ala.

The cause of the accident, which occurred in heavy fog, has not been determined. The Coast Guard has said an investigation could take several months.

In 90 percent of the more than 100 cases reviewed by the newspaper, officers were reprimanded or ordered to undergo retraining for errors that led to the shootings. In about 60 percent of the cases, police officials concluded the shootings were justified.

Such shootings have come under renewed scrutiny after three police officers killed a suspected burglar at the end of a chase last week when his car moved slowly toward them. The confrontation was broadcast live on television.

Police Chief William J. Bratton said later that he has been considering a ban on shooting at moving vehicles.

subdued, like you would expect."

The crew members have declined interview requests, Gray said. Hospital chaplains helped the crew talk to their families in the Philippines by telephone.

Coast Guard officials said that most of the ethanol spewed from the tanker had evaporated, but fuel from the ship's storage tanks has formed a 9-square-mile oil slick in the Atlantic.

Guardsmen don't yet know how much of the fuel aboard the ship spilled; but they say it was carrying 48,000 gallons of stored diesel fuel and 193,000 gallons of fuel oil.

Environmental officials are most concerned about the fuel oil, a sticky, heavy, molasses-like substance that was used to power the vessel.

"That's what we're really keeping an eye on. We don't want that stuff to reach the shoreline," said Mike Sharon, chief of the emergency response division of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Computer models drawn by scientists at the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predict the spill will wash out to sea and not glom onto the shores of Maryland or Virginia, said Chief Warrant Officer Gene Maestas of the Coast Guard.

The 570-foot Bow Mariner was en route from New York to Houston Saturday when it sank in 200 feet of water. Lt. Chris Shaffer of Ocean City (Md.) Emergency Services said the explosion came after a fire started on the deck of the ship.

The ship is a chemical tanker built in 1982 and is managed by a Greek company, Ceres Hellenic Shipping Enterprises Ltd. A company spokesman said the ship had a crew of 24 Filipinos and three Greeks.

A spokesman for Norway-based Odfjell, the commercial operator and owner of the Singapore-flagged ship, declined to speculate on what caused the accident.

LA police fire on drivers despite policy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Police officers in Los Angeles have shot at motorists more than 100 times since 1985, killing 25 people and injuring at least 30, despite a department policy that discourages firing on drivers, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The department's policy manual states that firing at moving vehicles "is generally prohibited" because it is "rarely effective and is extremely hazardous to innocent persons."

But the practice has continued at a steady rate, with officers firing at motorists an average of six times a year, according to police records analyzed by the Los Angeles Times.

"Clearly we have issues that need to be addressed," he said. Police departments in Boston, Cincinnati, Detroit and other cities have adopted similar restrictions in recent years.

Law enforcement experts said wounding or killing a driver may cause the vehicle to swerve, and missing the target could threaten innocent bystanders.

"Except as the last resort, shootings at vehicles should be banned," said Geoffrey Alpert, a professor at the University of South Carolina, who has helped police agencies develop policies on the use of deadly force. "It has to be a pretty extreme situation to shoot at a car."

Church abuse goes from scandal to sermon

BOSTON (AP)—Roman Catholics confronted the problem of clergy sex abuse from pulpits, at protests and in parishes on Sunday, two days after the release of reports outlining the scandal's scope and the church's failure to protect children.

While some victims took to the streets in protest, claiming the church hierarchy was trying to whitewash the problem, others said they felt relieved the church is coming to terms with the issue.

"I don't want it to go away," said Maurice Smith, 52, a Boston resident who attended Mass at the Cathedral of

the Holy Cross. "The more we address it, the more we can feel it's not going to be swept under a rug or covered up."

Two church-sanctioned studies were released Friday by the National Review Board, a lay watchdog panel formed by church bishops. One, compiled by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, found there had been more than 10,000 abuse claims against nearly 4,400 priests from 1950 to 2002.

"We must pray ourselves out of this wilderness," said Monsignor Richard Sniezyk, who was installed administrator of the Springfield Diocese

in February after Bishop Thomas Dupre resigned in the face of abuse allegations. "We need not panic. We need to pray."

Nancy Fitzpatrick, 44, a registered nurse who attended a service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, called the report's numbers "shocking."

"But I do think the church is doing its best to address this," she said. "Releasing these figures means they're acknowledging how big a problem this is, and that's a good step."

Others feared the church might not have given a full account of the abuse claims.

"It's just staggering the numbers of

people who were abused," said Joan Smola, 59, of Hadley, Mass., who attended a vigil for victims in Springfield. "Do we know whether all of the dioceses were honest in what they put in their reports? I'm sure there are many victims who have not come forward."

About 100 victims and their supporters marched Sunday in Boston from Holy Cross to the Statehouse to urge Gov. Mitt Romney to appoint a clergy abuse task force to oversee the church in Massachusetts, where the sex abuse scandal erupted with reports in the Boston archdiocese.

ACROSS THE NATION

Man dragged by SUV and killed on Va. road

SPRINGFIELD, Va. (AP)—A sport utility vehicle hit a man on an interstate highway Sunday and dragged his body—apparently lodged in the suspension—8 1/2 miles to the driver's home, police said.

Josuel Galdino, 25, of Lorton, was charged with manslaughter, driving while intoxicated and felony hit-and-run after calling police to report a man's body was caught in the front-end suspension of his SUV.

Fairfax County Police spokeswoman Sophia Grinnan said Galdino hit Fitsum Gebreegziabher, 27, of Woodbridge, who had gotten out of his car after getting a flat tire on Interstate 95 southwest of Washington, D.C.

Grinnan said Galdino was traveling in a southbound lane near the Fairfax County Parkway when he hit Gebreegziabher.

Pleasure craft sinks off Miami, killing 1

MIAMI (AP)—A man died and two others survived after a 20-foot pleasure boat they were on sank in Biscayne Bay, the Coast Guard said Sunday.

The boat was anchored Saturday night when it started sinking and the three men abandoned the vessel, according to a Coast Guard news release. People on another boat saw the boat sinking and notified the Coast Guard.

Earl White Sr., 65, apparently drowned, Alberto de la Torrez managed to swim to a nearby island and Lester Vasquez was rescued from the water by a Coast Guard auxiliary vessel, according to the release.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission agents found White's body about 1 a.m., the Coast Guard said. The cause of the sinking was being investigated.

Relative of missing Miss. family charged

TAYLORSVILLE, Miss. (AP)—A relative of a family of three who disappeared on Valentine's Day was charged Sunday with a drug and firearms violation, and authorities said other charges were expected.

Authorities have not said whether they believe Michael and Rebecca Hargon and their 4-year-old son, James Patrick, are still alive. Blood and spent bullet casings were discovered at the family's home in Yazoo County.

"At this time, the whereabouts of the Hargon family are still unknown," said State Highway Patrol spokesman Warren Strain.

Earnest Lee Hargon, an adopted cousin of Michael Hargon, was charged with a single count of possession of methamphetamines while also in possession of a firearm. The firearm is an AR-15 assault rifle, which Strain said could be converted into an automatic weapon.

Edwards: Kerry full of 'Washington talk'

NEW YORK (AP)—Democratic presidential underdog John Edwards dismissed John Kerry's ideas as "the same old Washington talk" in a feisty debate Sunday, two days before the 10-state slate of contests known as Super Tuesday.

Edwards shed his congenial style and delivered his toughest critique yet of the Democratic front-runner. He said Kerry voted for bad trade agreements and that his proposals would "drive us

deeper and deeper into deficit."

In a swipe back at the freshman senator from North Carolina, Kerry, a 19-year-Senate veteran, said the country needs a president with experience and "proven ability to be able to stand up and take on tough fights."

Polls show Edwards trailing in all the states that vote on Tuesday, and he faces increasing pressure to bow out if he can't turn it around. He rejected the

suggestion that he was angling to become vice president.

"Oh, no. Oh, no, no. Far from it," he said, then tried to prove his point by putting Kerry on the defensive.

When Kerry said he and Edwards had the same position on trade, Edwards ticked off a list of agreements where they differed—pacts with Singapore, Chile, Africa and the Caribbean that Kerry voted for and he opposed.

When Kerry said he would have a 120-day review of all trade agreements, Edwards said that would be of little comfort to the jobless. "Don't worry, we've got a Washington committee that's studying this for you," Edwards mocked.

Kerry, of Massachusetts, questioned how someone who served five years with him in Congress can call anybody a Washington insider. "That seems to me to be Washington, D.C." Kerry said.

SF mayor slams Bush gay wedding stance

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Mayor Gavin Newsom accused President Bush of political showmanship and discrimination because of the Social Security Administration's decision to not accept any marriage licenses from San Francisco—gay or straight—until the same-sex issue is resolved.

Newsom addressed a huge crowd at his first town hall meeting Saturday, 52 days after taking office and a little more than two weeks after he authorized city officials to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Such meetings typically draw a few dozen people, but nearly 1,000 gathered for Saturday's town hall in the Castro district, a predominantly gay and lesbian section of the city. Some in the crowd carried signs reading: "Thank You Mayor" and "Gavin—Our Hero."

The Social Security Administration announced Friday it has told its offices nationwide not to accept marriage certificates from San Francisco as proof of identification for newlyweds looking to make name changes on Social Security cards.

Newsom called the move "political and retaliatory."

"The president is not only now discriminating against gay couples, he's discriminating against straight people," he said.

Newsom also said his administration looks forward to arguing the constitutionality of same-sex marriages before the California Supreme Court.

The high court on Friday declined a request by Attorney General Bill Lockyer to immediately shut down San Francisco's gay weddings. More than 3,400 such ceremonies have been performed since the city began issuing the licenses Feb. 12.



Doug Okun, left, and spouse Eric Ethington play with 3-and-1/2 month-old twin daughters Sophia Rose, foreground, and Elizabeth Ruby, at their home in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2004. Before a civil servant pronounced them "spouses for life" on Feb. 13, Okun, 38, and Ethington, 37, already considered themselves married, as the two men had been together eight years and had recently become fathers. AP

US gay marriage ban faces many hurdles

Whether to amend the U.S. Constitution to outlaw gay marriages is a question that's provoking arguments across the country. But it's one the public will never vote on directly. The idea—proposed last week by President Bush—would ultimately be decided by state legislators in at least 38 states, assuming it gets enough support in Congress first.

There is no guarantee that an amendment would win wide support. While some legislators in conservative states say there's passionate support for a constitutional ban on gay marriage, others say that altering one of the nation's founding documents raises troubling questions.

"There's a number of people that are out there ... in the Legislature, that have

strong feelings and opinions on this. But as far as using the Constitution to express those feelings, I don't think there's as much support," said Chuck Gipp, the GOP leader in the Iowa House.

Already, Iowa and 13 other states are seeking this year to amend their state constitutions to ban same-sex marriages. But if Indiana is any clue, it'll be a tough fight.

Last week, Democrats in the state House refused to let a Republican leader speak on amending the state constitution, spurring GOP members to walk out; Democrats heckled them as they left. "This is the most critical piece of the people's business," shouted GOP Rep. Brian Bosma.

That's in a state where only a simple

majority is required for an amendment to pass. Democrats control a bare majority in the House, and Republicans control the Senate.

At least eight states require super-majorities of three-fifths or more of all legislators in each chamber, making the requirement for three-quarters of states to ratify a federal constitutional amendment even more difficult.

"It's a high hurdle," said Alan Rosenthal, an expert in legislatures at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at New Jersey's Rutgers University. "What's going to drive it is events. If there's significant undermining of the status of marriage in California or Massachusetts, I think that will have a big impact on the states."

Asia

Japan confirms 3rd bird flu outbreak

By NATALIE OBIKO PEARSON
AP WRITER

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's agriculture minister on Sunday slammed a senior poultry industry executive for failing to report the deaths of tens of thousands of chickens on his farm, where officials have confirmed the country's third outbreak of bird flu.

About 18,000 of the 200,000 chickens at the farm in southwestern Japan died a week before an anonymous phone call tipped local officials to the outbreak on Thursday. The farm,

run by Hajimu Asada, had continued to ship live chickens, meat and eggs to customers.

"It is terribly regrettable that the report (of the outbreak) came so late," particularly because Asada is deputy chairman of the Japan Poultry Association, Agriculture Minister Yoshiyuki Kamei said in comments to public broadcaster NHK.

Local media quoted Asada, chairman of Asada Nosan, which owns the farm, as saying it had decided to ship live chickens as much as two months ahead of schedule after noticing the birds were dying en masse.

"I received a report from the farm saying it had decided to push up shipments. Deciding that the dead birds would not be accepted (by customers), they probably decided to ship them out earlier than planned," the Asahi newspaper quoted Asada as saying Saturday.

Asada added that he would take responsibility for the decision, the Asahi said.

The local government confirmed the outbreak in a statement Sunday after test results showed the birds were infected with an H5 strain of the virus.

Results of further tests this

week were expected to show whether the chickens were infected with the deadly H5N1 strain that has killed seven people in Thailand and 15 in Vietnam, an agricultural ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

On Sunday, authorities in Kyoto prefecture (state) began culling the farm's surviving birds to help contain the disease.

But officials feared bird flu had already spread to a slaughterhouse in neighboring Hyogo prefecture after 25 birds there tested positive for the virus in initial tests Saturday.

Five of those came from the

infected Kyoto farm. The remaining 20 came from different suppliers and are believed to have contracted the illness at the slaughterhouse.

While most of the meat from the slaughterhouse was successfully recalled before it reached store shelves, meat from 10 birds was delivered to a restaurant in Osaka, the Hyogo government said in a statement.

Officials stressed there is no evidence of humans contracting the flu from eating well-cooked meat or eggs and urged consumers to be calm.

Separately, a chicken kept as

a pet at an elementary school in western Nagano prefecture turned out not to have bird flu as initially suspected, the local government said.

Japan has confirmed two other outbreaks. More than 28,000 birds were destroyed in Yamaguchi prefecture, on the southwestern tip of the country's main island, after the disease was confirmed there in January.

China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam have been hit by bird flu. Pakistan and Taiwan reported a milder strain of the virus.

Group claims it blew up Philippines ferry

MARIVELES, Philippines (AP)—The Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility Sunday for a ferry explosion and fire that killed at least two people, though 180 more were missing, according to a radio report.

The Radio Mindanao Network said Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Sulaiman claimed Friday's explosion was revenge for government attacks in the southern Mindanao area. Abu Sayyaf has often called the radio network in the past.

Fire raced through the Superferry 14 on Friday shortly after it left Manila for central and southern islands, killing one person and injuring 12 others. Witnesses reported a powerful explosion that sparked an inferno.

The fire occurred the same day that two alleged Abu Sayyaf members were convicted of kidnapping an American in 2000 and another was arraigned in a separate mass abduction.

Radio Mindanao did not air the claim, but reporter Benji Alejandro said he first received a claim of responsibility via a mobile phone text message Friday morning and asked the sender to call to verify the allegation. Joel Sanson, the network's program director, said he also had been called and recognized Sulaiman's voice.

Sanson quoted Sulaiman as saying: "They have been warned before but they never listened."

There was no immediate reaction from the government.

Officials have not speculated on the cause of the fire, but said they could not rule out terrorism even though police dogs checked the ferry before it left Manila. Witnesses have said the blaze was triggered by an explosion at 12:50 a.m., two hours into the ferry's regular trip to the central and southern Philippines.

Police intelligence reports have said the ferries, one of the



Coastguard rescuers approach the burnt wreckage of the Superferry 14 to prepare for night search inside the vessel in Mariveles, Bataan province, north of Manila, Sunday Feb. 29, 2004. AP

Divers find no bodies, government dismisses Abu Sayyaf terror claim

MARIVELES, Philippines (AP)—Divers returned to a half-sunken, gutted ferry Monday to search for 137 missing passengers, while the government played down claims by a Muslim militant group that it planted a bomb which caused the ship to catch fire last week.

Chances of finding additional survivors were slim. Only one person has been confirmed dead from the fire that swept through Superferry 14 on Friday shortly after it left Manila, while most of the 899

passengers and crew survived by getting into lifeboats or jumping into the sea. Witnesses reported a large explosion started the blaze.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has dismissed the claim of responsibility by the Abu Sayyaf militants as propaganda, saying investigators had not concluded the blast was due to terrorists. Officials have not ruled out terrorism, however, in their continuing investigation.

The ship's owner, WG&A, reduced the number of missing from 184 to 137 on Monday, after some survivors contacted

authorities over the weekend. It's possible that others may have escaped and failed to inform officials, spokeswoman Gina Virtusio said.

Arroyo said the Abu Sayyaf's claim that it planted a bomb appeared to be an afterthought by the group to use the accident to spread fear.

"There is nothing in the investigation that proves that this was an act of terrorists," Arroyo said at coast guard headquarters, where she sought to console relatives of the missing late Sunday.

At the mouth of Manila Bay.

Rescuers found one body after the fire broke out but 180 people are missing, leading some officials to speculate that they may have been trapped in the inferno that engulfed the giant vessel.

main forms of inter-island travel in the sprawling archipelago, were potential targets of Abu Sayyaf, a group on the U.S. list of terrorist groups.

After being turned back by intense heat and smoke a day earlier, coast guard divers

Philippines deports two American brothers to US

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Two American brothers arrested in the Philippines last year for alleged ties to al-Qaida-linked groups were deported to the United States, immigration officials said Monday.

Michael Ray Stubbs, 55, of Antioch, Calif., and his brother James, 56, who also goes by the name Jamil Daud Mujahid, of Newark, N.J., were arrested in December and ordered deported.

Authorities alleged that James Stubbs met with members of the Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf as well as the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The brothers had been under surveillance at the time of their arrests, and had entered the country on tourist visas. But they also carried documents indicating that they were soliciting funds to build Muslim schools and mosques, officials said.

Authorities said there was no evidence linking the men to any past or planned terrorist plots.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said the brothers were deported to Japan on Saturday, where U.S. marshals escorted them on a flight to the United States.

Relatives of the men confirmed they have returned to the San Francisco Bay area.

In December, FBI agents said they were investigating Michael Stubbs to determine if he had access to sensitive information while working in the 1990s as an air conditioning and heating technician at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

According to Philippine military intelligence reports, James Stubbs left his job as a teacher in California to study Arabic in Sudan. He met last May with several charity groups suspected of being al-Qaida fronts, founded by Mahmoud Afif Abdeljalil—believed to be a close associate of Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law.

Abdeljalil was arrested last September in the southern Philippine city of Zamboanga on charges of having an expired visa. He was ordered deported after interrogation.

Indonesia hotel bombing suspect Dahlan arrested

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A Muslim activist has been arrested in central Indonesia for last year's J.W. Marriott Hotel bombing, becoming the 15th suspect detained in connection with the blast that killed 12 people, police said Sunday.

The suspect, identified only as Dahlan, was captured Thursday in the East Java town of Ngawi, about 354 miles southeast of Jakarta, said a police official in nearby Surabaya.

Police declined to disclose the role played by Dahlan in the

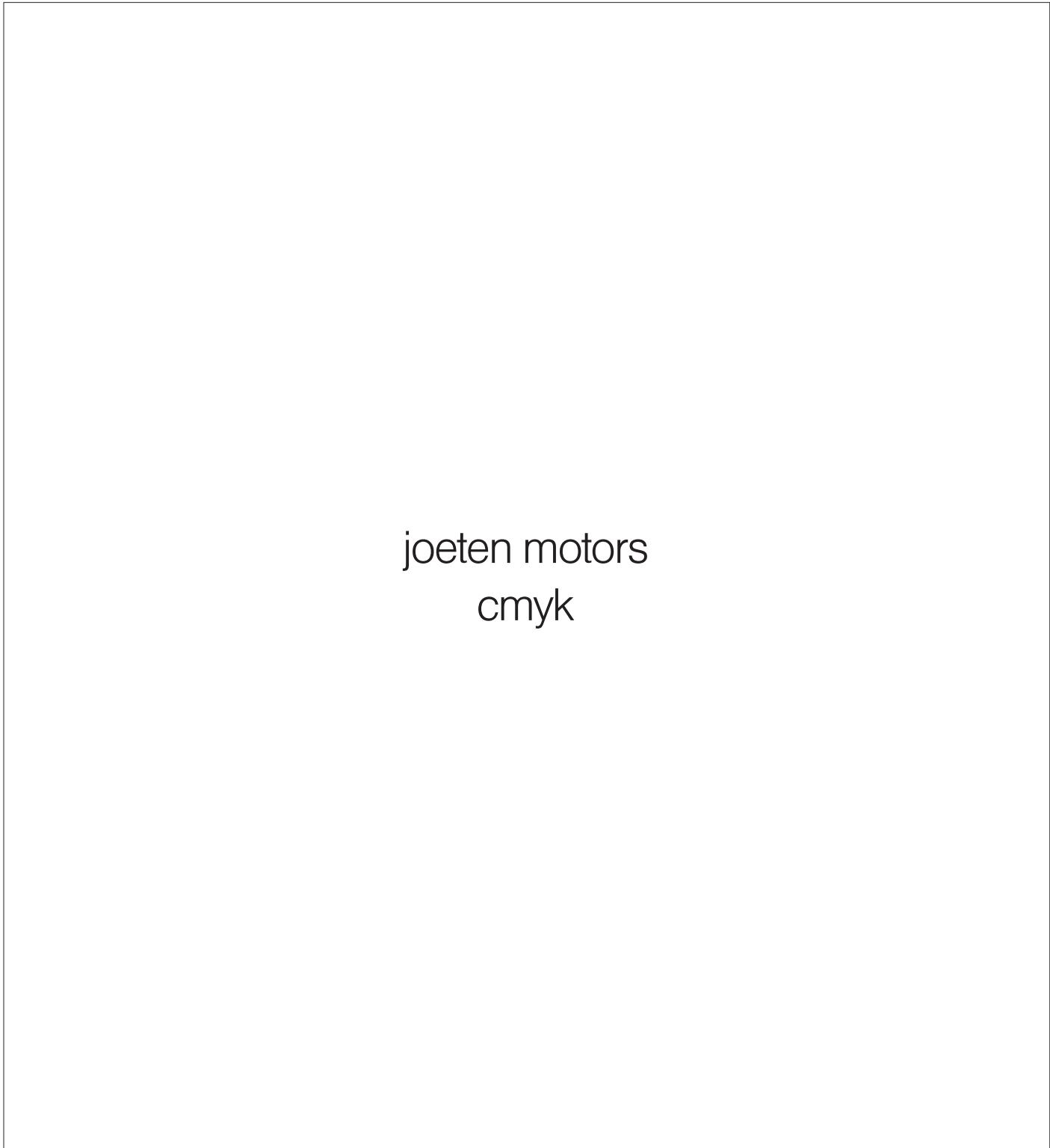
Aug. 5 suicide bombing, which injured about 150 people. It was also unclear where Dahlan is being held.

Indonesian authorities have said the attack was carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian group that is allegedly linked to the al-Qaida terror network.

On Thursday, a court in Bengkulu on Sumatra island, convicted the first Marriott suspect, Sardona Siliwangi, of storing explosives used in bombing and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

World

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Life & Style

'Lord of the Rings' sweeps Oscars

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

The epic journey of a raggedy gang of humans, hobbits, wizards, dwarves and elves hoisted the fantasy genre to Oscar glory Sunday as "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" won a record-breaking 11 Oscars, sweeping every category in which it was nominated, including best picture.

The directing Oscar went to Peter Jackson, overlord of arguably the biggest undertaking in cinema history, the simultaneous filming of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth trilogy: "The Fellowship of the Ring," "The Two Towers" and "The Return of the King."

"I'm so honored and relieved that the academy and the members of the academy that have supported us have seen past the trolls and the wizards and the hobbits in recognizing fantasy this year," said Jackson, who just a few years ago was an obscure New Zealander known mainly for one admired art-house film ("Heavenly Creatures"), a run-of-the-mill Hollywood horror tale ("The Frighteners") and a scattering of cult splatter flicks ("Bad Taste," and "Meet the Feebles").

Other top Oscars played out predictably, with front-runners claiming all four acting trophies—the first for each.

Sean Penn took the best-actor prize as a vengeful father in "Mystic River," and Charlize Theron won for best actress as serial killer Aileen Wuornos in "Monster."

Oscars for supporting performances went to Tim Robbins as a man emotionally hamstrung by childhood trauma in "Mystic River" and Renee Zellweger as a hardy Confederate survivor in "Cold Mountain."

"Return of the King" matched the record 11 Oscar wins of "Titanic" and "Ben-Hur" and became only the third movie to sweep every category in which it was nominated, following "Gigi" and "The Last Emperor," which both went nine-for-nine.

Jackson also shared the adapted-screenplay Oscar with co-writers Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens.

The 42-year-old writer-director thanked "our wonderful cast who just got their tongues around this rather awkward text and made it come to life with such devotion and passion and heart."

"Return of the King" also won for song, musical score, visual effects, editing, makeup, art direction, costume design and sound mixing.

Penn, who skipped the Oscars when previously nominated for "Dead Man Walking," "Sweet and Lowdown" and "I Am Sam," showed up and accepted graciously—although he made a crack about there being no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Dismissive of awards in the past, Penn missed last month's Golden Globes but made a point to attend other Oscar and awards functions.

"If there's one thing that actors know, other than there weren't any WMDs, it's that there is no such thing as best in acting. And that's proven by these great actors that I was nominated



Actress Renee Zellweger holds the Oscar she won for best supporting actress for her work in Cold Mountain; actor Sean Penn holds the Oscar he won for best actor for his work in Mystic River, actor Tim Robbins holds the Oscar he won for best supporting actor for his work in Mystic River, and actress Charlize Theron holds the Oscar she won for best actress for her work in Monster, from left, after the 76th Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 29, 2004, in Los Angeles. AP

Oscar red carpet is nod to old Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Glamour. Glamour. More Glamour. The red carpet fashions at Sunday's Academy Awards were a throwback to Oscars past as stars wore sophisticated and classy gowns, such as Naomi Watts' stunning nude-colored Versace dress.

The gown was adorned with huge teardrop-shaped crystals. "It's the Oscars and there's so much tradition, I wanted to go old-school glamour," said Watts, who wore her hair in an updo and simple, dewy makeup.

Her accessories? Dainty drop earrings and boyfriend Heath Ledger, who wore a Gucci tuxedo and oversized sunglasses.

Charlize Theron went with a sentimental favorite: a nude beaded Gucci gown by Tom Ford, who just showed his last collection for the label.

"I've always been a huge fan of his work. I thought if he's leaving, I want to wear one more dress," Theron said.

Theron's silver purse was done by a fellow South African, Lana Marks, and her drop earrings by Chopard featured 46 diamonds and were nicknamed "The Shooting Star."

Many stars seemed to go for neutral colors as a way to show respect for the Oscars, said Cindi Leive, Glamour magazine's editor in chief.

with," said Penn, who received a standing ovation.

In "Monster," Theron was virtually unrecognizable, packing on 30 pounds and concealing her cover-girl beauty behind false teeth, splotchy makeup and dark contact lenses.

"I know everybody in New



Naomi Watts nominated for best actress for "21 Grams" arrives for the 76th annual Academy Awards, Sunday, Feb. 29, 2004, in Los Angeles. AP

"It's kind of incredible how retro glam the whole thing is. ... There was nothing rock 'n' roll," Leive said.

Scarlett Johansson's green Alberto Ferretti gown was "apropos for her moment in time," said Reeve Chace, author of "The Complete Book of Oscar Fashion" (Reed Press).

Zealand's been thanked, so I'm going to thank everybody in South Africa, my home country," said Theron, who had been generally regarded as a lightweight actress before "Monster." Her earlier credits include "The Cider House Rules," last summer's heist caper "The Italian Job" and such flops as "Reindeer Games" and "Sweet November."

Renee Zellweger again looked to Carolina Herrera, wearing a white strapless column gown with a draped bodice and back bow. She also wore almost \$1 million worth of Cartier jewels, including a 73-carat oval and pear-shaped diamond necklace with a 35-carat diamond bracelet.

"I loved the elegant and regal look of white on Renee," said Tom Julian, fashion commentator for the Web site Oscar.com. Julian also praised Susan Sarandon's black cap-sleeve, silk satin Gucci dress and Oprah Winfrey's sea foam green wrap gown by Gianfranco Ferré.

A blond Julia Roberts, wearing a bronze Giorgio Armani gown with a deep V-neck and a gathered waist decorated with a jewel, said her new hair color was "just for work."

Other outstanding looks were Diane Lane's white gown with silver beaded cutouts, complemented by simple-yet-elegant 6-carat diamond stud earrings from Harry Winston; Patricia Clarkson's high-neck, nude-colored beaded gown by Michael Vollbracht for Bill Blass; Angelina Jolie's plunging white V-neck by Marc Bouwer; and Liv Tyler's black Givenchy Couture dress with its low back and long train.

Sofia Coppola's Oscar victory for original screenplay for "Lost in Translation" made her family the second clan of three-generation Oscar winners, joining Walter, John and Anjelica Huston. Her father is five-time Oscar winner Francis Ford Coppola, with all the awards for "Return of the King," produced in New Zealand, Crystal joked: "It's now official. There is nobody left in New Zealand to thank."

who was an executive producer on "Lost in Translation." Her grandfather, Carmine Coppola, won for musical score on "The Godfather Part II."

"Thank you to my dad for everything he taught me," Coppola said. "Thank you to my brother Roman and all my friends who were there for me when I was stuck at 12 pages and encouraged me to keep writing."

Only a handful of fantasy films have been nominated for the top Oscar—"The Fellowship of the Ring" and "The Two Towers" among them—but none had won until now.

Other "Return of the King" winners included composer Howard Shore, who took his second Oscar for writing "Lord of the Rings" music, having won two years ago on Part 1 of the saga, "The Fellowship of the Ring."

"Into the West," the wistful tune of farewell from "Return of the King," won the best-song Oscar. The song was written by Fran Walsh, the film's co-screenwriter; Howard Shore, its music composer; and Annie Lennox, who sings the tune.

Billy Crystal, returning as host for the first time in four years, opened with his usual montage of nominees, having himself inserted into spoofs of key Oscar contenders, including Diane Keaton's screeching nude scene in "Something's Gotta Give."

He joked that for the first time, the show was being simulcast in Aramaic, a poke at "The Passion of the Christ," Mel Gibson's divisive religious film that took in \$117.5 million in its first five days. The movie was done in Aramaic and Latin, with English subtitles.

With all the awards for "Return of the King," produced in New Zealand, Crystal joked: "It's now official. There is nobody left in New Zealand to thank."

Secret ballots and statuettes at Oscars



AP

Academy Award winners stand onstage after the conclusion of the 76th Annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles Sunday, Feb. 29, 2004.

By ANTHONY BREZNICAN
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The first hush fell backstage on Sunday when two grim-faced accountants walked in, each toting a valise that contained Oscar night's surprises.

Security guards flanked Gregory Garrison and Rick Rosas as they searched for their hiding spot in the green room, where Tom Hanks had arrived early to feast on snacks. One security guard turned to another and pointed at the briefcase.

"That'd be worth a bundle on eBay," he said.

It was 3:55 p.m., one hour and 35 minutes from showtime. Billy Crystal remained out of sight in his dressing room, while his team of comedy writers gathered in the hallway behind the stage.

Robin Williams arrived and immediately began cracking off-color jokes to anyone who would listen. Most of them involved Janet Jackson, her breast and the Super Bowl.

As presenter Owen Wilson walked into the green room in shirtsleeves, Hanks stopped him like the world's most famous hall monitor.

"Where's your jacket," he demanded.

"I left it downstairs," Wilson said, hesitantly.

"Oh," Hanks said, eyeing him with mock suspicion before giving him the go-ahead.

Marc Shaiman, who was in charge of orchestrating Crystal's musical comedy bit, approached the group of joke writers and asked, "Is this where the funny starts?"

"No," Steinberg told him.

Overheard during the Academy Awards

Overheard during Sunday night's 76th annual Academy Awards presentations at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre:

"It's a clean sweep!" Steven Spielberg announcing best picture winner "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," which won a record-breaking 11 Oscars.

"This is just unbelievable and I'm so honored and relieved that the academy and the members of the academy that have supported us and have seen past the trolls and the wizards and the hobbits and recognizing fantasy this year. Fantasy is an F-word that hopefully the 5-second delay won't do anything with."—Oscar-winning director Peter Jackson after "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" won the best picture Academy Award.

"If there's one thing that actors know, other than that there weren't any WMDs, it's that there is no such thing as

best in acting and that's proven by these great actors that I was nominated with,"—Best-actor winner Sean Penn ("Mystic River"), referring to weapons of mass destruction.

"And I know everybody in New Zealand's been thanked so I'm going to thank everybody in South Africa, my home country. They are all watching tonight. And I'm bringing this home next week."—Best-actress winner Charlize Theron ("Monster").

"In this movie I play the victim of abuse and violence and if you are out there and are a person who has had that tragedy befall you there is no shame and no weakness in seeking help and counseling. It is sometimes the strongest thing you can do to stop the cycle of violence."—Supporting-actor winner Tim Robbins, accepting his Oscar for "Mystic River."

"Thank you for sharing this journey with me, every day of it. Without you there would be

none of this. Thank you for dreaming so much bigger than I would ever dare to dream and for making me believe."—Supporting-actress winner Renee Zellweger ("Cold Mountain"), to manager John Carrabino, during her Oscar acceptance speech.

"It just popped into my head. I've only been going out with him two months. In Australia, we're very open about the whole thing. It wasn't a problem as far as I was concerned."—Adam Elliot, winner of best animated short ("Harvie Krumpet"), on whether he was worried about the 5-second delay when he thanked his boyfriend during his acceptance speech.

"Forty years ago this country went down a rabbit hole in Vietnam and millions died. I fear we're going down a rabbit hole once again."—Errol Morris, winner of best documentary feature for "The Fog of War."

"This is where it stops."

"Oh yeah," Shaiman deadpanned. "I guess the yuks stop here."

Everyone groaned.

In addition to the comedy, there was also some drama. Jim Carrey and his entourage huddled with Oscar telecast producer Joe Roth over last-minute changes to the speech introducing honorary Oscar winner Blake Edwards. The usually buoyant Carrey was all business as they slashed lines from the script.

Crystal emerged from his

dressing room, sipping a glass of water with lemon. He grouped his writers together in a circle. They put their hands in the middle and wished each other a good show before breaking apart.

Crystal paced backstage in the shadows, preparing for his monologue by blowing air between his lips and making a "yo-yo, yo-yo" sound to work his vocal chords.

With one minute left to go, he watched a television screen showing "Access Hollywood" commentator Billy Bush

grabbing celebrities out of their seats for interviews in ABC's preshow telecast.

"This is the most annoying man in show business," Crystal said to no one in particular.

He shared a few whispered words with Sean Connery, who introduced the telecast, and watched some of his own videotaped comedy montage as the show began. Crystal didn't laugh - although others around him were cracking up.

Seconds later, he was onstage, finally smiling, greeting the waves of applause.

'Finding Nemo' finds Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Finding Nemo" found its way to the Oscar podium Sunday night, winning the Academy Award for best animated feature.

The child of divorcing corporate parents Walt Disney Co. and Pixar Animation Studios, Nemo was one of the smash hits of 2003, taking in \$340 million in ticket sales. The lushly animated film tells the story of a father fish looking for his little son, who struggles to make his way back home to the ocean.

But amid the feel-good film's success, the family behind it was fragmenting, with Pixar chief Steve Jobs breaking off negotiations with Michael Eisner-led Disney. Eisner, in turn, has been under attack for his management of the company he has led for 20 years, which recently was the target of a takeover bid by cable giant Comcast.

The winning moment at Kodak Theatre could have been awkward, but director Andrew Stanton simply credited the "extraordinary filmmaking environment at Pixar" as well as Dick Cook, the chairman of Walt Disney Studios.

Backstage, he was asked if Pixar's first Oscar would help the company go it alone.

wallace

Mom has trouble letting go of son planning his wedding

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I am 22. My fiance, "David," is 23. We are both busy with our internships, working and finishing our degrees. David and his older brother still live at home, but now that we are planning a wedding and preparing our apartment, he sometimes spends the evening with me—having dinner, planning, doing homework, etc. Occasionally he stays over. This has caused his mother, "Vonda," to freak out.

Vonda says she's not used to him being away from home. (My apartment is only a mile away.) She makes a big fuss about him not eating dinner with them or not calling to let her know his plans. She constantly tries to make us feel guilty about not spending more time with them. But at 23, neither David nor I think her requests are appropriate.

Two days ago Vonda e-mailed my parents and accused them of allowing me to do whatever I want. It's ridiculous, because I have lived on my own for three years and my parents have no part in this. It's almost like she doesn't take us seriously and that's why we're being treated like children.

The next few months are supposed to be for us to plan our wedding. I don't want to have to deal with this. I don't even want to be in the presence of David's parents now because of their lack of respect and civility. Must I tolerate his mother's behavior? Am I compelled to spend time in his parents' house?

TURNED OFF IN TOLEDO

DEAR TURNED OFF: David's mother appears to be suffering from acute separation anxiety. Both of her adult sons still live under her roof and eat at her table. She looks at you—an independent woman—and sees a worldly rival "who's allowed to do whatever she wants," stealing her boy away.

David is long overdue for a serious talk with his parents. While, in a sense, he will always be "their little boy," he is a man now and will soon be striking out on his own. However, if he's not going to be home for dinner and plans to stay the night at your place, it would be considerate of him to let his parents know so they won't be concerned.

Must you tolerate Vonda's behavior? Yes, for the time being. Are you compelled to spend time with your future in-laws? You will if you're as smart as I think you are. There's much to be gained from strong family ties, if it's possible to maintain them. I have a hunch Vonda feels very isolated right now. A step in the right direction would be for you to ask her for some input on those wedding plans.

.....

DEAR ABBY: When a person is asked what is wrong with him or her, are they obliged under the rules of good manners to give an unambiguous report of their illness, even if their malady is a result of AIDS, TB, VD, mental illness or any of the other diseases to which humankind is subjected?

My question stems from an intensive interrogation. Your response will be deeply appreciated.

WONDERING IN RANCHO CUCAMONGA

DEAR WONDERING: Although the "interrogation" may have been out of concern for you and well-intentioned, you were under no social obligation to give a specific reply. If it happens again, smile and say, "If that were any of your business, you'd already know the answer."

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)



Dear Abby



Actor-filmmaker Mel Gibson chats with host Jay Leno about his film "The Passion of the Christ," during the taping of NBC's "The Tonight Show," Thursday evening, Feb. 26, 2004, in Burbank, Calif. AP

'Passion' hauls in \$117.5M

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mel Gibson's gamble on "The Passion of the Christ" paid off enormously, riding a storm of religious debate to a \$117.5 million haul in its first five days, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"The Passion," which debuted on Ash Wednesday, rocketed to the No. 1 box-office slot for the weekend with \$76.2 million from Friday to Sunday. It was the seventh-best three-day opening ever, behind "Spider-Man" at \$114.8 million and such Hollywood franchises as "The Matrix Reloaded" and the first two "Harry Potter" movies.

"The Passion" put up the second-best five-day figures for a movie opening on Wednesday, behind last year's "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" at \$124.1 million and ahead of "Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace" at \$105.6 million.

The first movie released in

2004 to cross the \$100 million mark, "The Passion" easily passed the weekend's No. 2 flick, "50 First Dates" at \$88.7 million, as the year's top-grossing film.

Once considered a niche film that would appeal mainly to conservative Christians, the bloody chronicle of Christ's crucifixion swelled to blockbuster proportions as Gibson rallied church groups to support it and accusations of anti-Semitism brought mainstream attention.

"It's an event movie," said Bruce Davey, Gibson's partner in his film company Icon Productions. "It all began with the grass-roots campaign we started, but the controversy has obviously helped in creating awareness."

Some Jewish and Christian leaders have said they fear "The Passion" will revive the notion that Jews collectively were responsible for Christ's death.

Gibson has denied such accusations, and key cast members—including Jim Caviezel, who plays Christ, and Maia Morgenstern, a Jewish

actress who plays Mary—said Gibson approached the film with great respect for Judaic traditions.

Gibson put up the movie's \$25 million budget and will reap most of the returns. Hollywood studios passed on the movie, so Gibson put it in theaters through independent distributor Newmarket Films, which will get a cut of Gibson's profits.

"The Passion" provided a box-office jolt for theaters, whose ticket sales were running 7 percent behind last year's. After four straight weekends of declining revenue, the top 12 movies took in \$132.1 million, up 53 percent from the same weekend a year ago.

"The Passion" took in more money than the rest of the top 12 combined, with other new movies making barely a ripple.

The Ashley Judd crime thriller "Twisted" debuted at No. 3 with \$9.1 million from Friday to Sunday. "Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights," a prequel to the 1980s hit, opened in fifth place with \$5.9 million. The horror spoof "Broken Lizard's

Club Dread" premiered at No. 10 with \$3 million.

Playing in 3,043 theaters, "The Passion" averaged a whopping \$25,041, compared to \$3,367 in 2,703 cinemas for "Twisted."

The success of "The Passion" is more remarkable considering it was shot in two dead languages, Aramaic and Latin, and plays with English subtitles. The movie's violence, including a savage depiction of Christ's scourging and crucifixion, also did not deter movie-goers, who lifted "The Passion" to the second-best R-rated opening ever behind "The Matrix Reloaded" at \$91.8 million for its first weekend.

"The Passion" is the most unlikely blockbuster I've ever seen. I don't have enough adjectives in my repertoire to describe it," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "Even nonbelievers probably felt the need to see this film because it's undeniably about one of the most important events in history, and everybody is talking about it."

Cronkite to get Truman Neighbor Award

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Journalist Walter Cronkite will receive the 2004 Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award.

Cronkite, who was the anchorman and managing editor of the CBS Evening News for nearly 20 years, was selected "because of his lifelong commitment and dedication to the high ideas of truth in

broadcasting," said Karl Zobrist, president of the award foundation.

The award is meant to honor people in public life who have improved the community and the country through citizenship, patriotism, self-reliance and service.

It will be presented on May 7 as part of the Truman Foundation's annual luncheon. It

marks the 120th birthday of President Truman.

Previous recipients of the award include C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb, former Senator and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, historian and Truman biographer David McCullough, scientist Jonas Salk, and former President Gerald Ford.

Rocker Peter Frampton reads to children

CINCINNATI (AP)—British-born rocker Peter Frampton knows how to pack the crowds—even at the local library.

Frampton, 53, drew dozens of children and their parents—many of whom were Frampton fans—to a children's book reading where he read Shel Silverstein's work, "The Giving Tree."

Frampton, who moved to suburban Cincinnati in 2000 with his family, has made time for several local benefit concerts and charity events.

"I try to squeeze as much time as I can to encourage reading and education," Frampton told The Cincinnati Post in Thursday's editions.

Frampton still tours internationally more than 30 years after he helped form the group Humble Pie.

Fan Carol Meier recalled going to a Frampton concert in the 1970s.

"I never thought, 30 years later, I'd see him reading children's books at the local library," she said.

Thompson: Bill Cosby spoof first 'SNL' laugh

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kenan Thompson credits an uncom-fortable moment for Bill Cosby at the 2003 Emmy Awards with helping him get his first laugh on NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

In a skit with Maya Rudolph, Thompson, a new "SNL" cast member, spoofed Cosby getting miffed at microphone-wielding "reporter" Wanda Sykes, who was out in the audience.

"My first laugh on the show was that Bill Cosby thing," the 25-year-old actor-comedian told reporters recently, according to AP Radio. "My first words, the 'get-outta-my-face thing,' it just went over so well, it was like the greatest feeling in the world."

Pastimes

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY

Tiger Woods, Tracey Ullman, Davy Jones, Michael Nesmith

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: If you want to make changes, this is the year. List all the things you've been dreaming about and make them come true. Keep in mind that life is simple; it's people who make it complicated. With a little creativity and structure, success should be yours. Your numbers are 3, 10, 13, 22, 31, 40

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ARIES (*March 21-April 19*)

Be proud of what you have done in the past and push forward, making new accomplishments your goal. Recognition will be yours for the time and effort you've put in this past year. ☺☺☺



TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*)

Take the advice offered by a good friend. It may be time to give up on something that isn't working so you can move forward. Talking about your situation will help. ☺☺☺



GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*)

Rely on your contacts to help you make the right choices today. There is a struggle ahead, but it will be worth every minute you spend working toward your goal. ☺☺☺☺



CANCER (*June 21-July 22*)

You may want to avoid any interaction with people you deal with in a business sense. You aren't likely to get your way or make deals happen today. Someone may stand in your way. ☺☺



LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*)

Get involved in whatever sounds enticing today. Social gatherings or getting together with people who have similar interests will lead to romance or a partnership. ☺☺☺☺☺



VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*)

Take a final look at your important papers before the year comes to a close. You still have time to make changes. A health issue may pop up if you have been overdoing it. ☺☺☺



LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*)

Don't take any partnership you have for granted. If you can't agree on the direction you should pursue, talk now before things deteriorate any further. ☺☺☺



SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*)

You may get a chance to work alongside a great team. If you wish to make a professional change, this is also a great time. An interview today could give you a whole new outlook. ☺☺☺



SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*)

You should be able to entertain anyone you are dealing with today. Your charm and knowledge will win you points and get you the results you are looking for. ☺☺☺☺☺



CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*)

You may discover that you have either spent too much or one of your financial deals has fallen through. Limitations are evident. Concentrate on the projects already in the works. ☺☺



AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*)

Travel or short jaunts that will enable you to further your interests will bring positive results. A new acquaintance will turn out to play an important role in your life. ☺☺☺☺



PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*)

Don't let memories depress you, especially if you lost someone who was dear to your heart. Only by reviewing the past can you move into the future. This is the time for new beginnings. ☺☺☺

BIRTHDAY BABY: You are a bit of a daredevil, often taking chances. Most of the time you land on your feet, but every once in a while it doesn't work out the way you plan. Take caution.

(*Need advice? Check out Eugenia on the Web at www.astroadvice.com or www.eugenialast.com.*)

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Perry leads Memorial going into final

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER

DUBLIN, Ohio (AP) — Another brutal Saturday at Muirfield - in Ohio, not Scotland - was too much for Tiger Woods.

But not for Kenny Perry.

Despite cold, whipping winds and the toughest weekend conditions at Muirfield Village in almost 20 years, Perry made only one bogey in a round of 2-under 70 and led Lee Janzen by two shots going into the final round.

"That's probably better than the 61 I shot last week," Perry said. "The conditions were brutal. It was raw out there."

Perry, coming off a victory at Colonial with a record score, again ended a solid round with a birdie on the 18th. His approach ran up the ridge, then trickled down the slope to 8 feet.

He was at 13-under 203.

Woods, meanwhile, struggled with his swing and the gusts up to 30 mph made it look even worse. He hit a tee shot out of bounds for triple bogey and played the front nine in 42. He had to play the final four holes in 2 under to shoot 76.

It was his worst round ever at Memorial, where he is the only three-time winner, and at times it was reminiscent of his 81 in the third round of the British Open last year at Muirfield - with one exception.

"It's a hell of a lot warmer here," Woods said.

He wound up 11 strokes out of the lead - just like at Muirfield last summer - and no chance to catch the golf's hottest players.

That's not the case for a few others.

Janzen, winless since his second U.S. Open title five years ago, holed two bunkers shots on the back nine - for birdie on No. 15 and for par on the No.



Kenny Perry, of Franklin, Ky., watches his tee shot on the par-5 fifth hole during the third round of the Memorial Tournament Saturday May 31, 2003 in Dublin, Ohio. Perry parred the hole.

17 - and had a 71 that left him at 11-under 202.

"I just wanted to hang in there," Janzen said. "Regardless of what I shot, I just wanted to enjoy the day - kind of silly to enjoy a day like today - but enjoy that I play golf and I was near the lead."

No one had a more enjoyable day than Jose Maria Olazabal. His bogey-free 66 was more than nine strokes better than the average score Saturday. That shot him up from a tie for 30th into a tie for third, along with Vijay Singh and Retief Goosen at 8-under 208.

Singh had a 72, while Goosen had three bogeys on the back nine for a 74.

Olazabal was the only player to break 70, and only 11 players broke par.

About two hours before the leaders teed off, the third round was halted for 46 minutes as a storm system passed. Left behind was the nastiest weather of

the year on the PGA Tour, with temperatures in the low 50s and gusts that spell trouble along the tree-lined fairways of Muirfield Village.

"It's hard to judge where the wind is coming from," Woods said. "The thing that's hard is to get committed over a shot."

That was evident on the first fairway. Woods held his pose and followed the flight of the ball until it landed 25 yards short of the green. He looked at the treetops in frustration, trying to figure out the swirling wind, then tossed his club at the bag.

It would get a lot worse, especially on No. 6 when Woods pulled his tee shot through the trees, into a backyard and out of bounds by about 2 feet. He walked all the way up to his ball before being told it was not in play, then had to return to the tee.

He wound up with a triple bogey

and made the turn in 42.

Woods couldn't turn anywhere for sympathy. Eleven players shot 80 or worse, the highest number on the weekend ever at the Memorial.

John Daly

drove the 343-yard 14th hole for the third straight day, and this time got a birdie. He also had two triple bogeys and a quadruple bogey for an 83.

"It's a survival course more than anything out there," Ernie Els said after his 70. "It's pretty

punishing. It's the hardest day we've had on the tour to date."

That's what made Olazabal's round so brilliant.

The field average was 75.5, the highest for a weekend round since 1981 at Muirfield Village, and Olazabal made it look like he was at the Bob Hope Classic.

"It's as good a round as I've seen in a long time," said Jeff Sluman, his playing partner. "I'm not unhappy with my 72, but after looking at Ollie's round, it felt like a million."

Ohio tends to bring out the best in Olazabal. He shot a 61 up the road at Firestone in 1990 when he won the World Series of Golf, and took just as much pleasure out of this 66.

"Here, it's a different story," Olazabal said. "To shoot 66, I think it's really close to that 61."

It got him a lot closer to the lead,

but still needing five shots to catch the guy on top.

Perry has been practically flawless the last two weeks, no matter the tournament, the course or the condition he faces.

"My goal today was to make 18 pars," Perry said. "I parred the first nine and said, 'Man, I might do this.'"

A birdie on the par-3 12th over water ruined that, and another birdie on the 14th almost turned the Memorial into a runaway. But Janzen stayed on his heels, and Perry made his first bogey in 50 holes.

"It seems like things are going my way," Perry said. "I make the putts when I need to and get the good breaks, but I'm executing my shots."

MLBSTANDINGS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Team	W	L	Pct	G
N.Y. Yankees	32	23	.582	-
Boston	31	23	.574	1½
Toronto	31	26	.544	2
Baltimore	27	27	.500	41½
Tampa Bay	21	33	.389	101½

Central Division

Minnesota	31	23	.574	-
Kansas City	27	26	.509	31½
Chi. White Sox	25	29	.463	6
Cleveland	21	32	.396	91½
Detroit	14	39	.264	161½

West Division

Seattle	36	18	.667	-
Oakland	31	23	.574	5
Anaheim	26	27	.491	91½
Texas	25	29	.463	11

Yesterday's Games

Detroit	4	N.Y. Yankees	2
Chicago White Sox	at Cleveland	ppd, rain	
Oakland	7	Kansas City	6
Toronto	10	Boston	7
Seattle	5	Minnesota	2
Anaheim	6	Tampa Bay	1
Baltimore	7	Texas	1

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	37	18	.673	-
Montreal	33	22	.600	4
Philadelphia	29	25	.537	71½
Florida	26	31	.456	12
N.Y. Mets	25	30	.455	12

Central Division

Chi. Cubs	30	24	.556	-
Houston	29	27	.518	2
St. Louis	27	27	.500	3
Cincinnati	26	29	.473	41½
Pittsburgh	24	30	.444	6
Milwaukee	21	34	.382	91½

West Division

San Francisco	34	20	.630	-
Los Angeles	31	24	.564	31½
Colorado	27	29	.482	8
Arizona	25	30	.455	91½
San Diego	16	40	.286	19

Yesterday's Games

N.Y. Mets	4	Atlanta	2
Chicago Cubs	1	Houston	0
Pittsburgh	4	St. Louis	3
Florida	3	Cincinnati	2
Montreal	at Philadelphia	ppd, rain	
San Diego	8	Arizona	7
Los Angeles	3	Milwaukee	0
San Francisco	2	Colorado	1

San Diego Padres nip Diamondbacks, 8-7



SAN DIEGO

(AP) — Pinch-hitter Lou Merloni drove in the go-ahead run in San Diego's two-run eighth inning with a sacrifice fly, lifting the Padres to an 8-7 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Saturday night.

Merloni's sacrifice fly off Oscar Villarreal, Arizona's third pitcher in the inning, gave San Diego just its sixth win in 33 games. The Padres went 5-24 in May, their worst month in team history.

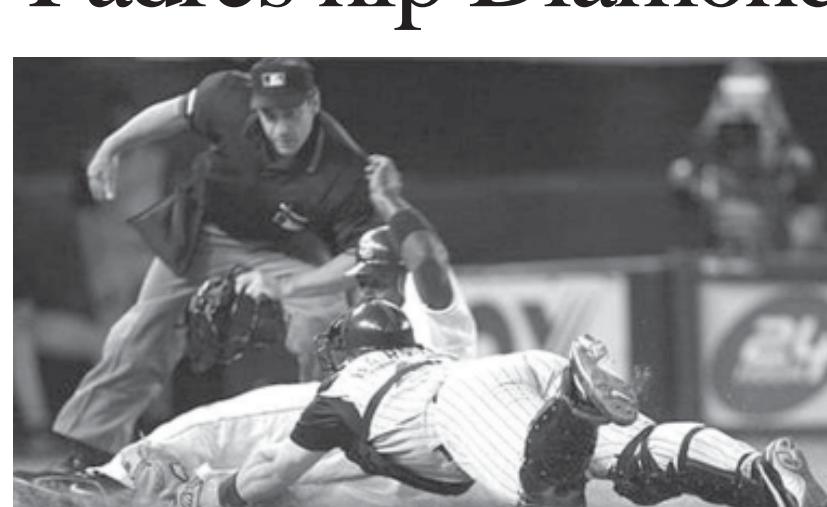
Mark Loretta's pinch-hit single of Mike Myers scored Gary Matthews Jr., who singled off Scott Service (0-1), tied it at 7-all.

Luis Gonzalez drove in four runs for Arizona and Alex Cintron went 3-for-4, including a two-run double in the top of the eighth inning. Cintron had two doubles and a triple.

Trailing 6-4 in the eighth inning, Arizona rebounded with back-to-back doubles by Matt Williams and Cintron off Jesse Orosco (1-1).

Matt Herges pitched the ninth for his second saves in three opportunities.

The Diamondbacks' rally started off Luther Hackman, who hit Junior Spivey



leading off the eighth. Mark Grace's one-out single knocked out Hackman. Williams, pinch-hitting for Tony Womack, doubled into the left-field corner off Orosco, scoring Spivey and cutting the lead to 6-5. Cintron

Mighty Ducks top Devils 3-2 in OT

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP SPORTS WRITER

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Martin Brodeur showed he's not perfect, but the Anaheim Mighty Ducks still are in playoff overtime—and that's why they're still alive in the Stanley Cup finals.

Ruslan Salei scored off Adam Oates' faceoff win at 6:59 into overtime and the Mighty Ducks, taking advantage of one of the biggest misplays of Brodeur's career, beat the New Jersey Devils 3-2 in Game 3 Saturday night.

Oates fed the puck off the faceoff to Salei at the top of the slot, and Brodeur barely reacted to his one-timer as the Mighty Ducks improved to 6-0 in playoff overtimes. The Devils are 2-2.

It was essentially a must-win game for the Ducks, who played with the desperation expected of a team that trailed 2-0 in the series and almost certainly would have had no chance to raise the cup had it lost.

Ducks coach Mike Babcock joked that Salei is one of his hardest shooters, if not the most accurate.

"He can really shoot the puck. We always tell him shoot the puck on net once in a while," Babcock said. "He bangs the puck off the glass with the best of them."

Salei said the faceoff win was so clean, "You've got to shoot. So far, it's the biggest goal I've ever scored. We had to win this game. We had to get some momentum going. Now maybe it will go seven games, or six."



AP
New Jersey Devils' Scott Gomez, left, is congratulated by teammate Patrik Elias following his third period goal against the Anaheim Mighty Ducks in Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Finals in Anaheim, Calif., Saturday, May 31, 2003. Elias had an assist on the play.

Larry Brown to coach Pistons, AP learns

By LARRY LAGE
AP SPORTS WRITER

A U B U R N HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Rick Carlisle sat elbow-to-elbow with the man who had just fired him, Joe Dumars. In a bizarre scene, talk turned to Larry Brown, who will become Detroit's next coach.

"If you think he's going to bring in a stiff behind me, you're nuts," Carlisle said Saturday. "He's going to bring in a big-time guy, and if he can do that he will have done his job."

Carlisle was fired with one year and \$2 million left on his contract despite winning two straight division titles, 100 regular-season games, a Coach of the Year award and leading the Pistons to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 1991.

He will be replaced by Brown, who has already reached agreement with the Pistons on a long-term deal, according to a source within the league with knowledge of the discussions between the Pistons and Brown. The source spoke to The Associated Press on condition of

anonymity, saying the hiring will become official on Monday.

Saturday's news conference was strange - Carlisle poking fun at himself during an opening statement, then initiating jokes and defending the decision when Dumars was pressed to explain the dismissal.

"The guy at the gate almost wouldn't let me in to my own firing," Carlisle said.

When Dumars said, "This is not a fun day at all," Carlisle quipped: "It's all right. You can have fun with it."

Brown resigned as coach of the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday after six seasons. The Sixers released him from a contractual clause that prohibited him from coaching another NBA team if he left Philadelphia prematurely.

Counting Detroit, there are eight NBA coaching vacancies.

When asked about Brown, Dumars said, "We'll be talking to him," adding that he has heard Brown's name linked to openings in Houston, Cleveland and Washington.

"This is not about Larry Brown, this is about Rick Carlisle," Dumars said.

Brown did not return two messages left by The AP at his home.

Philadelphia captain Eric

Snow understands why the Pistons are going after his former coach.

"With Rick Carlisle gone, it would be great for Detroit's organization if it was fortunate enough to get Larry Brown," Snow said. "He's a Hall of Famer who is a great coach and a great teacher that would make every one of their players better, and that would make the Pistons even better."

Carlisle, in his first head coaching job, helped turn Detroit from a lottery team into the top-seeded squad in the East this season. He was honored as NBA Coach of the Year for the 2001-02 season.

He led the Pistons to a 100-64 regular-season record and a 12-15 postseason mark over two years.

The Pistons' season ended May 24 when they were swept by New Jersey in the conference finals. Carlisle's coaching was publicly criticized during the first round when Detroit fell behind 3-1 against Orlando. But he turned to little-used Tayshaun Price and Mehmet Okur to generate some offense and help the Pistons advance.

"You can get into a conversation about what may or not be fair, or you can be excited about being at the peak of your career," Carlisle said. "I'll look

back and remember the good things and the things that were accomplished by a group that no one thought had a chance."

Carlisle was hired as Detroit's coach on May 25, 2001, after the team fired George Irvine following a 32-50 season. There was believed to be tension between Dumars and Carlisle, but both denied that was true Saturday.

Carlisle said he was unsure if he would pursue a coaching job right away or take a year off to be a television analyst.

"There was never any talk of an extension, there was none from me to Joe, or from them to me. I didn't feel that one was owed to me," Carlisle said. "I was ready to honor the last year of my contract and be judged after three years. That would've been fine."

Brown, 62, had two years left in his contract that paid him \$6 million per season in Philadelphia.

He also coached Denver (five years), Indiana (four years), San Antonio (3 1/2 years), New Jersey (two years), Carolina of the ABA (two years) and the Clippers (18 months).

Brown's tenure with the Sixers was his longest in his 31-year coaching career. He led the Sixers to the playoffs for five straight seasons, including the 2001 NBA Finals, and will coach



AP
Philadelphia 76ers head coach Larry Brown directs his team in the first quarter in this April 15, 2003 photo, in Chicago against the Chicago Bulls. The Detroit Pistons fired coach Rick Carlisle and will hire Larry Brown, a source within the league said Saturday, May 31, 2003.

the U.S. men's national team this summer at an Olympic qualifying tournament in Puerto Rico.

He has a 879-685 record in the NBA, and 1,285-853 overall, including ABA and college. Brown won an NCAA championship with Kansas in 1988, and became the first coach to take six NBA teams to the playoffs when the 76ers made it in 1999.

Brown would inherit a

scoring only once in 16 games.

That might have won it had Brodeur not made a grievous mistake on a play that couldn't have been more routine.

Only 45 seconds after the Devils' Patrik Elias tied it at 1, Giguere fed the puck up ice to Ozolinsh who, draped by two Devils, pushed it toward the net.

Brodeur, positioned at the left of the crease, began to scramble over to play the puck, only to drop his stick. With Brodeur unable to defend, the puck trickled into the side of the net as the goalie dropped to his knees, raising his hand to his head in disbelief.

It was a perfectly awful play by the goalie who was near perfect for the first seven periods of the series.

"Obviously, they got breaks and that's what it's all about. They got them and we didn't get them," Burns said. "We had a great chance tonight (to go up 3-0). But it came down to errors and mistakes, like every hockey game does."

The maddening misplay at 14:47 of the second came slightly more than 11 minutes after Ozolinsh set up Anaheim's first goal of the series, by the infrequently used Marc Chouinard. That goal at 3:39 of the second ended Brodeur's scoreless streak of 143 minutes, 39 seconds, the second-longest to start the finals.

Ozolinsh shot the puck toward the net from along the boards, and it deflected off Chouinard's stick and past Brodeur to the glove side. The Devils scored the first goal in each of the first two games on their home ice, and the Ducks never challenged after that in either game.

Pistons team that has the No. 2 pick in the June 26 draft. Detroit will likely select a scorer - Darko Milicic of Serbia or Syracuse's Carmelo Anthony - to complement a young nucleus of Richard Hamilton, Chauncey Billups, Ben Wallace and rookies Okur and Prince.

Brown's brother, Herb, was head coach of the Pistons from 1975-76 through 1977-78.

Mobil



Mobil blasts past PDI
Host Mobil Oil was armed and dangerous last Thursday as they gunned down Pacific Development Inc, 103-68, in the second day of competition in the Mobil Oil Invitational Basketball Tournament.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

28 MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2003

Arenas leads Warriors past Jazz, 108-95

Gilbert Arenas scored 27 points and the Golden State Warriors beat the Utah Jazz 108-95 Saturday night to win for the fifth time in six games.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE